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INTERNATIONAL HUMOUR.

EDITED BY W. H. DIRCKS.

THE HUMOUR OF FRANCE.



THE PIECE OF STRING.

[See page 420.]

THE HUMOUR OF FRANCE

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED,
WITH INTRODUCTION AND
BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX, BY
ELIZABETH LEE: WITH
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FRÉNZENY.



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INTRODUCTION.

M. RENAN once said, "Teach all nations to laugh in French,"¹ and he further declared that the French language, manners, wines, and songs had exercised an apostleship of good humour and humanity throughout the world. No one is likely to dispute the fact that for gaiety and cheerfulness the Frenchman has no rival. He cultivates and expresses his feelings in a greater degree than we do, and considers the effort to be cheerful a social duty. He is always ready to talk and to make himself generally agreeable, and being much less selfish and self-centred in social intercourse than the Englishman, he is ever anxious to give pleasure. The Parisian especially never fails to be witty, and to desire to amuse, and to be amused. Even in times of gloom and trouble the French preserve their light-heartedness and gaiety. During the Revolution there appeared in one column of the newspapers a list of the victims of the guillotine, and in another a list of "to-night's entertainments." And to that period belong two of the most brilliant of French wits—Chamfort and Rivarol. It was the former who said of the old *régime* that it was "an absolute monarchy tempered by good sayings." At the time of the siege, too, many anecdotes are told of the Parisian's good humour and gaiety. In a lately published book,² a gentleman who was in Paris during the siege tells the following story :—
"A man seeing a rabbit hanging up in a shop asked the price. 'Forty-five francs, sir,' was the answer. 'You are joking! Forty-five francs! It's mighty ridiculous,' protested the would-be purchaser. 'I am not joking, sir. I cannot take a farthing less.' Thereupon the man went away. But he

¹ *Apprenez à toutes les nations à rire en français.*

² *An Englishman in Paris.*

had scarcely gone a few steps when the dealer called him back. 'Well! how much are you going to take off?' 'I am not going to take off a penny, but I thought I might tell you that this rabbit played the drum.'” Wit is inborn in the Frenchman: he is endowed with a keen sense of the ridiculous, and will have wit at any price, and at all times. And it must be remembered that the utterance of pointed sayings, and quickness of repartee, are not confined to men of letters and men of education alone, but may be met with among all classes.

It has been stated over and over again that French literature contains much wit but little humour; like most assertions of the sort, it is only partly true. As humorists of the finest type, Rabelais and Molière stand only second to Shakespeare; Panurge runs Falstaff very close, and the rogueries and comicalities of Scapin and Mascarille are hard to match. It is apart from our purpose here to enter into any elaborate discussion on the distinction between wit and humour. Humour has been aptly defined as thinking in jest while feeling in earnest, and wit as thinking in jest without any underlying seriousness. There is no doubt that seriousness and humour go together, and that the most serious nations are the most humorous. In the literatures of the world, those of England and Spain must bear the palm for humour. While humour is always based on temperament and feeling, wit is a purely intellectual faculty, the product of art and fancy, and in dealing with the lighter side of French literature, as we have now to do, it is the latter quality that we shall find the more abundant. French wit is a thing apart. The peculiar kind of delight it affords is a matter of perception and not of argument. Its substance is so delicate and airy, that only the French words *esprit* and *spirituel* adequately describe it. The literatures of other nations possess nothing that can be compared with its sparkling vivacity and effervescent gaiety.

As literature is, after all, nothing more than a reflection of the finest and most beautiful thoughts of men and women, we shall find that this lighter side of French literature reflects many of the most distinctive characteristics of the mind and temper of the French people. It must also be remembered that the French language is peculiarly adapted for the expression of wit and

fancy, and that French writers wield it with an unequalled perfection of style and with a fine artistic taste. The most eminent critics are unanimously agreed that French literature is greatest on its lighter side, and that no one can surpass the French in telling a tale, or in pointing jest or epigram. It is worthy of notice that nearly all remarkable persons in France have some witticism attached to their name, and Talleyrand is perhaps more generally remembered as the man who said, "Speech was given us to conceal our thoughts," than as the founder of Napoleon's empire.

Wit is to be found in the literature of France earlier than in that of any other nation; it first appears in the twelfth century, and has ever since formed a very large and important part of French verse and prose. But the beginning of the Middle Ages does not afford much that calls for remark. The comic episodes of the *Chansons de Gestes* offer nothing that is very distinctive, and not much more can be said for the parodies of them that have reached us. As an example there is one that begins in the usual way with the history of the hero's family. At his birth are great omens. The ass, the dog, and the cat shriek all night, the stars grow pale and the nightingales dumb, and the hero turns out to be a model of awkwardness, clumsiness, and ugliness. But this jejune stuff soon gave way to the real *esprit Gaulois*. It is first seen in the *Fabliaux* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There was nothing in the previous literature of any country to correspond with the *fabliau*. It has been defined as "the recital, generally comic, of a real or possible incident occurring in ordinary human life." The story is the thing! The comedy usually takes a satirical turn, and deals with all sorts and conditions of men from the prince to the peasant, and was enjoyed by an equally varied class. An old poet writes:—

" Les rois, les princes, les courtiers,¹
Comtes, barons, et vavasseurs
Aiment contes, chansons et fables
Et bons dits qui sont délitables ;
Car ils ôtent le noir penser ;
Deuil et ennui font oublier."

¹ *Courtisans.*

They were written in verse, in short, eight-syllabled lines, and related some anecdote, some amusing fact, some good saying; they were greatly taken up with the relations between husbands and wives—a source of amusement that has never failed the French,—with the iniquities of priests and monks, with the foolishness and credulity of the ignorant, and though for the most part they are very coarse and licentious, they are always full of wit and fun. Their brevity and their hearty laughter exactly suited the national spirit, and the success of that style of composition was enormous. The prose tale and the farce were the direct outcome of the *fabliau*, and it was not long before the novel and the comedy followed. Their sources are many and various: some were obtained from the ancient classics, others from the Bible or the lives of the saints. They reappear again and again in different forms in French literature, and attain their apotheosis in the *Contes* of La Fontaine, who returns to the verse form of the original. They often afforded plots to the dramatists; Molière founded his *Médecin Malgré Lui* on the old *fabliau* of *Le Vilain Mire*. These were followed by the great satirical poem of the *Roman du Renart*. There has been much controversy as to its nationality, but it seems to be finally agreed that the story owes most to France. The design of the satire is to depreciate the spirit of chivalry that distinguished the Middle Ages. Renard attains all his desires by the victory of ruse and cunning over might, and so clever is he that we cannot help being heartily diverted by his adventures.

The origins of the comic drama—a line in which France has won such distinguished success—must be looked for in mediæval times. The most celebrated farce of this early period is *L'avocat Patelin*, attributed to the fifteenth century, and familiar to us in the modern version of Brueys and Palaprat. In its older form it offers a capital example of excellent farce, full of real *gaulois* light-heartedness and fun. Another very amusing farce was the *Farce du Cuvier*. A wife obliges her henpecked husband to sign his name to a long list of duties he is to perform. A little later she accidentally falls into the washing-tub, and to her cries for help

the husband replies: "Cela n'est point à mon rollet."¹ Such farces were most commonly acted by the members of what we should now call a dramatic society—*Les Enfants sans souci*.

In the next period the first figure of importance for our present purpose is that of the poet Villon. As Mr. John Payne says in the introduction to his translation of Villon's poems, Villon was the first great poet of the people, the cry of the people rang out in his verse, and he was filled with their sufferings and oppression. And he was equally filled with their *bonhomie*, *gourmandise*, and satirical good humour. He loved the life of common things, the easy familiarity of the streets and highways. He had an intimate knowledge of, and a great affection for, the home and outdoor life of the merchant, the hawker, the artisan, the mountebank, the gipsy, the thief and prostitute of his time. His poems afford a complete picture of the life of fifteenth-century Paris, and contain genuine pathos, as well as grim sardonic humour. His most important works are *Le Petit Testament* and *Le Grand Testament*. In them, before starting on a journey, though but a tourist in rags, he thinks it well to make certain bequests, and among others leaves his nomination to the university to poor scholars, which will scarcely serve to enrich them; and to a friend who is too fat, two law-suits to reduce his *embonpoint*. A number of poems, chiefly in the form of *ballades* and *rondeaux*, are inserted. He loved wine and good cheer, and possessed in a high degree the eminently French characteristic of preserving his cheerfulness and love of joking amid the most adverse circumstances. Much in his roving, vagabond life reminds us of the Elizabethans, more especially of Greene and Nash. Clément Marot, who edited Villon, was what we should now call an occasional poet, and may be regarded as in some sort the father of the light modern poetry of France, the precursor of La Fontaine and Béranger.

We now come to the greatest of French humorists—to Rabelais, scholar, philosopher, teller of tales, satirist, monk, doctor of medicine, priest, all at once. Sainte-Beuve calls him "notre Shakespeare dans le comique," and, as was observed above, Panurge runs the tun-bellied knight very close. It

¹ Schedule.

would be impossible in so small a space as this brief essay to give any detailed account of the *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*. Suffice it to indicate some of the more amusing passages. Gargantua, who is of course a giant—in fact they are all giants—rides a great mare to Paris, and by the whisking of her tail knocks down whole forests. After a battle Gargantua combs the cannon-balls out of his hair, and on another occasion eats up six pilgrims in a salad, and they live for some time in the valleys and recesses of his mouth. The description of the Abbey of Thelema, with its famous motto, *Fais ce que voudras*, is too well known to need repetition here. The meeting of Pantagruel with Panurge, who addresses him in thirteen different languages, with no result, and at last discovers that he too is a native of France, is immensely diverting. So is the discourse on the pleasure and profit of being in debt, and on the advisability of Panurge getting married. The episode of Judge Bridoise, who decides his cases by the throw of the dice, is considered by many the best piece of comedy in Rabelais. And then there is the great storm, and Panurge's cowardly conduct, and the melting of the frozen words. On occasions Rabelais can be serious, but more generally he revels in wild buffoonery, and is more often than not exceedingly coarse. But the fault must be laid more to the taste of the times than to the man. In knowledge of human nature he stands only second to Shakespeare, and will live for all time as one of the world's greatest humorists. Another great writer of the Renaissance, Montaigne, the essayist, ranks also as a humorist. It was at one time believed that his family was of English extraction, and certain traits in the character of his genius seem to confirm it. But it is now thought unlikely. To him belongs the honour of first using the word "essay" in its modern sense. Hazlitt says of him that "he was the first who had the courage to say as an author what he felt as a man." He discourses in desultory fashion, half humorous, half serious, of all that concerns man and his life on this planet.

The sixteenth century closed with two works that come under the head of satires, and ought therefore to be mentioned here. The first, the famous *Satyre Ménippée*, directed against the

Leaguers, describes in burlesque the meeting of the States-General in 1593. It opens with a description of the procession of the members, who then proceed to make speeches in which all their meannesses and littlenesses are exposed. It is a fine example of political satire, and had an immense effect on public opinion at the time, and although it shares the fate of all such works, inasmuch as the interest of the events it treats of is gone, it remains as literary satire of the highest quality, scarcely exaggerating reality, and yet rendering it ridiculous. It is the work of seven men. Nicolas Rapin and Jean Passerat contributed the verses; Leroy, Gillot, Chrestien Pithou, and Durant, the prose. It is ironical in the extreme. "You see," said Mayenne, "the danger and inconvenience of peace which sets everything in order, and gives right to him to whom it belongs." The second work is the satires of Mathurin Régnier. They deal with social subjects, and are written after a classical model. The most famous is the thirteenth, entitled *Macette*, an hypocritical old woman, who pretends to virtue, and in that way is a corruptor of youth.

This rapid and all-incomplete sketch has brought us to the seventeenth century, the golden age of French literature. Among the many great names, one stands out boldly—that of Molière, the greatest writer of comedy, excepting Shakespeare, the modern world has produced. His first success was *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, in which he laughed at the extravagant absurdities of the learned ladies of the Parisian coteries of the period. He studied his types at first hand, and his creations possess an imperishable truth. Tartuffe, Alceste, Harpagon, M. Jourdain, Scapin and Mascarille, Trissotin, and Vadius, to choose a few at random, form an inimitable gallery of portraits after nature but slightly exaggerated. Like Shakespeare, being actor as well as dramatist, he thoroughly understood the exigencies of the stage. There is, too, a breadth and universality about his humour that marks him out from smaller men: even when he hits hardest he is large-minded and honest, and his portrayal of the weaknesses of human nature has something of the geniality and good-humour of our own Chaucer. A host of imitators followed him, of whom Regnard is the best. La Fontaine, good-humoured and easy-going, belongs

to this period. His inimitable fables will live and please as long as the world exists. Voiture, St. Amant, Benserade, Scarron, Furetière, Sarazin, Boisrobert, Madame de Sévigné, and last, though not least, Boileau, rise in our minds as belonging to the lighter literature of this time. Most of them excelled in the art of badinage so dear to the French, and especially to the ladies of the Rambouillet circle. Sarazin's delightful little ballade of an elopement is known to most readers of French poetry : it demonstrates that of all ways of love

“ L'amant est fol qui ne s'avise
Qu'il n'est rien tel que d'enlever.”¹

The last line forms the refrain. Some of Benserade's epigrams are excellent. As an example we may take the following :—

“ Pour son époux mourant une femme éperdue
Veut mourir ; la Mort vient, et la femme pâlit.
C'est pour lui, non pour moi, que vous êtes venue,
Lui dit-elle en tremblant ; le voilà dans son lit.”²

Unfortunately, or as some may think fortunately, the airy nothingness, the exquisite grace and fantasy of the best of their work, render translation an impossibility, I had almost written, an absurdity.

The eighteenth century presents a long roll of comic writers, among whom Lesage, Beaumarchais, Destouches, Marivaux, Piron, Gresset, and Sedaine are the chief. The two first have a world-wide reputation, and Gil Blas and Figaro are familiar figures to all. Lesage's comedy of *Turcaret* is a vigorous and amusing satire on the life of his time, especially on the financiers. But he is better known as the author of *Gil Blas* and *Le Diable*

¹ The lover's a fool who does not see that there's nothing like an elopement.

² A despairing wife wished to die for her dying husband ; Death came, and the wife grew pale. “ It's for him, not for me, that you are come,” she said to him trembling ; “ there he is in his bed.”

Boiteux, familiar to us in Smollett's translation. He is a master of the art of simple narration, of character drawing, and of epigram. His knowledge of human nature is both deep and wide, and the famous episode of the Archbishop of Granada will remain an everlasting memento of the weakness of human vanity. Voltaire does not come properly under the head of a comic writer, but his tales and satirical definitions are full of brilliant pointed wit, though of a somewhat sardonic character, and Diderot has considerable claim to the possession of wit and fancy. The song-writers, of whom France can show a long roll, were not idle. Panard wrote drinking songs, Jean Dorat produced some light sparkling verse, and Désaugiers paved the way for Béranger, perhaps the greatest song-writer in French or any literature.

I have purposely omitted so far any mention of the maxim writers and epigrammatists. They form such an important and characteristic section of French literature that they deserve a place apart. No nation has written better maxims, thoughts, and aphorisms : even should the matter be of little account, and that is but seldom, the form is always perfect. Mr. John Morley, in his memorable address on "Aphorisms," said :—"It is France that excels in the form apart from the matter of aphorism, and for the good reason that in France the arts of polished society were relatively at an early date the objects of a serious and deliberate cultivation, which was, and perhaps is, unknown in the rest of Europe. Conversation became a fine art. 'I hate war,' said one, 'it spoils conversation.' The leisured classes found their keenest relish in delicate irony, in piquancy, in sustained vivacity, in the study of niceties of observation and finish of phrase. . . . Society and conversation have not been among us the school of reflection, the spring of literary inspiration that they have been in France." When we think of French aphorisms, the names of La Rochefoucauld, Pascal, La Bruyère, Vauvenargues, Chamfort, Rivarol, De Bonald, and Joubert immediately rise in our minds. Frenchmen used to know La Rochefoucauld's little volume of maxims by heart, and it has been translated into every civilised tongue. They are said to have been suggested to him by Madame de Sablé, a prominent member of the Rambouillet circle. The sayings of these men

form an epitome of life : depth, satire, irony, brilliant wit, delicate criticism, refined cynicism, and sometimes true greatness of heart are to be found there. Like the gift of telling a short tale, maxim writing is a talent possessed by the French alone among nations.

It now remains to say a word about the modern writers included in this volume. They form a large proportion of the whole. It cannot, of course, be denied that in the process of mutation much of the wit and flavour of the originals evaporates. Nor must it be ignored, that to appreciate rightly even what is left, needs some knowledge of Parisian life and manners. For to most contemporary French men of letters France is Paris, and the modern wits are so intensely Parisian that they can scarcely be rightly understood without some acquaintance with the society and topography of Paris. What are the subjects which afford jest and laughter from Béranger to the poets and prose writers of contemporary France?—from Balzac and Sandeau to Gyp and Allais? They are all closely knit up with the manners and customs of social Paris. The priests ; the confessional ; Lent ; the way in which all knowledge of this wicked world is kept from girls until they marry ; the fact that a man is entirely unacquainted with his future wife until he is actually married to her ; the relations, often exceedingly complicated, between husband and wife—to the French husband matrimony generally means settling down to a quiet life, while the wife looks upon it as the beginning of a life of freedom and pleasure ; the mother-in-law, a much more important personage in France than in England ; the arbitrary rule of the *conciérge*, a figure unknown in England ; the anxiety of parents to procure husbands for their daughters ; the students and the grisettes ; the bourgeois grown rich ; the cheerful light-heartedness with which young authors and artists bear their poverty and early failures ; the regret, half-humorous, half-pathetic, for lost youth and its pleasures ; the clever way in which women often outwit men ; the injured husband, generally represented as a fool and a coward, though we can scarcely imagine such a dullard as the man in Labiche's farce, where the wife chalks the hour of her assignations with her lover on her husband's back ; the humours of the honey-

moon consequent on the fact that the happy pair are scarcely more than strangers, indeed, most often they have never been alone until they start on their wedding journey; the people who go in for cleverness and culture because it's the thing; the humours of bibliophiles and art collectors; the loungers in the streets and the cafés;—these are the main stock-in-trade of modern French wits. The excellent and happy use they make of what at a first glance seems somewhat bald material, is indicated in the extracts here included. There are also classes of writers who indulge in wild buffoonery, coarse brutality, and open licentiousness, but they are not of the best. Still, the English reader must remember that French manners permit a licence in writing unknown to us. The French joke openly about things we ignore or pass over in silence, at least in polite society. It is not our province here to discuss the good or evil of either custom. It naturally follows that certain episodes in French novels and plays are unsuited to English taste. But it is all so gay, so light-hearted, so good-natured, that the French would seem to have never a care in the world. The comic newspapers of France are to some extent a disappointment. They are so intensely topical, that after a couple of weeks a Parisian himself would probably have forgotten the allusions. The longer articles in the better-class papers are written by the foremost authors, who afterwards collect their sketches and publish them in volume form. The *feuilleton* system in vogue all over the Continent causes the works of many of the best authors to be first published in a newspaper. The comic journals are almost without exception well illustrated, and often contain racy descriptions of public men with portraits so excellent as to be scarcely caricatures. As an outcome of the importance attached to conversation, it will be noticed how many authors choose the dialogue form for conveying their thoughts. The French of to-day excel as much in comic drama as in comic narrative, and it may be objected that the stage is not adequately represented in this volume. But all who have attempted to detach scenes from plays for the illustration of a dramatist's merits will recognise the difficulty of selection. Taking Labiche, for instance, who is certainly the best of all the French writers of comic plays, it is almost

impossible to detach from his work any one scene that shall be funny by itself; each act and scene is so dovetailed into the other that when it stands alone it is scarcely comprehensible.

No volume of selections will afford satisfaction to all tastes. It will be seen that the words wit and humour have been interpreted in their widest sense; the broadly comic narrative, the amusing and witty tale, the satire, the light verse, the jovial song, the aphorism, the neatly-pointed epigram, lively descriptions of men and manners, the delicate handling of fantastical themes, all find a place, and yet many authors are either unrepresented altogether, or inadequately represented. The enormous wealth of material rendered the task of selection exceedingly difficult. Boileau and Scarron are perhaps the only great writers whose names will be looked for in vain, and as a book of this size could not include every one, they were omitted for the reason that it was scarcely possible to do them justice in brief extracts. While it has been the object to make the volume popular and amusing, it is hoped that it possesses also the merit of being fairly representative of the subject it pretends to deal with. But from the thirteenth century *fabliau* to Gyp's latest production is a long journey: in so extended a voyage in a strange land, the most observant traveller must, perforce, overlook many objects of interest.

Among the older writers, where a good translation already existed, advantage has been taken of it; for most of the translations from modern authors I alone am responsible. In a few cases the translations are shorter than the originals and slightly adapted in view of English tastes. I desire to express my gratitude to Mr. John Payne for his ready assent to the use of his admirable translations from Villon; to Mr. J. C. Nimmo for permission to insert Mr. Linton's translation of Basselin's "To his Nose" and "Vau de Vire," Marot's "In Paris," and Gautier's "China Ware" and "Serenade." For many facts I have been largely indebted to Mr. George Saintsbury's admirable *Short History of French Literature*; and during the preparation of the volume I have received many valuable

suggestions and much wise counsel from my friends among men of letters, and to them I give most cordial thanks.

ELIZABETH LEE.

KENSINGTON, *October 20, 1892.*

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THE HUMOUR OF FRANCE.

THE HUMOUR OF FRANCE.

*Le vilain
mine* THE PEASANT WHO BECAME A
PHYSICIAN.¹

THEY WENT, AND REQUESTED THEM
TO ACCOMPANY THEM."

THERE was once a peasant who by dint of avarice and hard work amassed a certain fortune. Besides corn and wine in abundance, and also hard cash, he had four horses and eight oxen in his stables. In spite of his large

¹ The origin of Molière's *Médecin malgré lui*.

property he had not thought of getting married. His friends and neighbours often reproached him for this, and he excused himself by saying that if he came across a good woman, he would make her his wife. They took upon themselves the task of choosing for him the best they could find, and began to make inquiries.

A few leagues off there lived in retirement an old knight, who was a widower and very poor. He had a daughter who was well educated and very pretty. The girl was of marriageable age, but as her father could give nothing with her, no one took any notice of her. At length the friends of the peasant asked her hand in his name, and the knight acceded to their request. Thus the maiden, who was good, and unwilling to displease her father, felt compelled, much to her disgust, to obey. The peasant, delighted with the match, hastened to conclude the bargain, and a hurried wedding took place.

But it was no sooner over than the rustic perceived to his annoyance that in his rank of life nothing could be less suitable than a knight's daughter. While he was away, occupied with the plough or other work of that sort, what would become of her, ignorant of the duties of a peasant's wife, who must, of course, remain at home? The priest, for whom every day in the week is a Sunday, would be very glad to cheer her loneliness. He would come to-day, to-morrow, worse luck to the husband's honour. What could he do if there was no remedy? "If, before leaving in the morning, I beat her," he said to himself, "she would cry all the rest of the day, and it is certain that while she was crying she wouldn't think of listening to lovers. In the evening when I returned, I should ask her forgiveness, and I know quite well how to obtain it."

Filled with this fine notion, he asked for his breakfast. After the meal he walked up to the lady and gave her such a blow on her face with his rough, heavy hand, that the marks

of his five fingers were imprinted on it. But that was not all. As if she was actually guilty, he gave her several more blows, and then departed to the fields. The poor girl began to cry and bewail her misery. "Oh, my father, why did you sacrifice me to this peasant? Hadn't we enough to eat? And why was I blind enough to consent to the marriage? Ah! my dearest mother, if I hadn't lost you, I should not be so unfortunate. What will become of me?" She was so distressed that she refused all consolation, and, as her husband had foreseen, spent the whole day in weeping.

When he returned in the evening his first care was to appease her anger. He said the devil was at the bottom of it. He swore never again to lift his hand against her, and asked her forgiveness with such an air of sincerity that the lady promised to forget everything. They supped together most amicably, and peace was entirely restored. But the peasant, seeing the success of his stratagem, resolved to employ it again. The next day, on rising, he invented some cause of dispute with his wife, beat her afresh, and departed as on the day before. She lost all hope, thought she was to be miserable for ever, and abandoned herself to her grief.

While she was thus lamenting, there came along two king's messengers, mounted on white horses. They greeted her in the king's name, and asked for food; they were dying of hunger. She prepared the best she had for them, and, while they were eating it, asked them where they were going. "We don't exactly know," was the reply. "We are looking for a clever physician, and, if necessary, must go to England. Princess Ade, the king's daughter, is ill. A week ago, while eating some fish, a bone stuck in her throat. All that has been done to get it out has been of no avail. She can neither eat nor sleep, and suffers incredible pain. The king, in despair, sent us to find some one capable of curing his daughter. If he loses her, he'll die."

"Don't seek any farther," replied the lady. "I know the very man you need, a great physician." "Oh, Heaven! You're sure? You're not deceiving us?" "No, I'm speaking the very truth. But the physician I mean is very eccentric, and his caprice takes the form of unwillingness to use his talent. So I warn you that unless you beat him severely, you'll get nothing out of him." "Oh, if it's only the matter of a beating, we'll thrash him. He's in good hands. Only tell us where he lives."

Thereupon the lady pointed out the field in which her husband was at work, and advised them not to forget the important point of which she had warned them. They thanked her, armed themselves with sticks, and, spurring up to the peasant, greeted him on the part of the king, and begged him to accompany them. "What for?" he asked. "To cure his daughter. We are aware of your great knowledge, and come expressly to seek you in his name." The rustic replied that he knew how to till the land, and if the king required any services of that sort he would be glad to give them; but he protested on his conscience that he knew absolutely nothing of medicine. "I see," said one of the horsemen to his companion, "that we shan't succeed with compliments, and that he needs a beating." Immediately they both dismounted, and set on him without mercy. At first he attempted to point out to them the injustice of their proceedings; but, as he was the weaker, he was forced to yield, and, humbly asking pardon, promised to obey them in all they might exact. They then made him mount one of his own plough horses, and brought him to the king.

The sovereign was in the greatest anxiety about his daughter's condition. The return of the two messengers restored hope, and he commanded them to come at once, and tell him the result of their search. After giving the highest praises to the wonderful and eccentric man they brought with them, they narrated their adventures. "I've

never seen a physician like that," said the king ; " but since he likes a whipping, and it is necessary for the curing of my daughter, so be it, let him be well thrashed."

He ordered the princess to come down, and commanding the peasant to approach, said, " Sir, this is the maiden you must cure." The poor devil fell on his knees, imploring mercy, and swore by all the saints in paradise that he did not know a syllable, not a single syllable, of *physic*. For all reply the king gave a signal, and immediately two tall sergeants, who stood in readiness armed with sticks, rained blows on his shoulders. " Mercy, mercy !" he exclaimed ; " I'll cure her, sire, I'll cure her."

The girl stood before him, pale and dying, with her mouth open ; she pointed to the place and cause of her pain. He cast about for some means of effecting the cure, for he saw there was no going back, that he must either do it or die from the effects of the blows. " The hurt is only in the throat," he said to himself. " If I could succeed in making her laugh, maybe the fish-bone would come out." The idea seemed not altogether impossible ; he asked the king to have a big fire lighted in the hall, and to leave him a moment alone with the princess.

Everybody withdrew, he made her sit down, undressed himself, stretched himself out in front of the fire, and with his black hooked nails began to scratch and clean himself with such comical contortions and grimaces that the girl, in spite of her pain, could not keep from laughing, and with the effort the fish-bone flew out of her mouth. He picked it up, and ran to the door. " Sire, here it is, here it is." " You have restored me my life," exclaimed the king, overjoyed, and he promised to reward him with fine clothing. The peasant thanked him. He only asked permission to go away, declaring that he had a great many things to look after at home. In vain did the king propose to him to become his friend and physician. He replied he was in a

great hurry, that he had not left anything to eat at home when he set out, and that it was imperative he should take the corn to the mill.

But when, at a fresh signal from the king, the two sergeants began to beat him again, and he felt the blows, he cried for mercy, and promised to remain not only for one day, but for all his life if they liked. He was then led into a neighbouring room, and after removing his rags, cutting his hair, and shaving him, they clothed him in a fine scarlet robe. He, all the while, thought of nothing but how he could possibly escape, and hoped that as he was sometimes left alone, he would soon find an opportunity.

The fame of the cure he had just effected spread abroad. At the news more than eighty invalids of the town, hoping he might be equally successful with them, came to the palace for the purpose of consulting him, and begged the king to say a word in their favour. The king summoned him. "Sir," he said, "I recommend those people to your notice; cure them immediately, and then send them home." "Sire," replied the peasant, "unless God helps me, it is impossible; there are too many of them." "Let the two sergeants come," replied the king. At their approach the wretched man, trembling in every limb, again asked pardon, and promised to cure them all, down to the humblest serving-maid.

He asked the king and all those who felt quite well to leave the hall. Alone with the sick persons, he arranged them all round the stove, in which he made an immense fire, and said, "Friends, it's no slight task to restore health to so many people, and especially as speedily as you wish. I only know one method, and that is to choose the one amongst you who is most ill, and to throw him into the fire. When he is burnt, the others must swallow his ashes. That the remedy is violent, I admit, but it's sure, and I take the entire responsibility of your cure on my shoulders."

At these words each looked at the other, as if to examine their respective conditions. But in the entire company there was no one consumptive or dropsical enough to own, for the whole of Normandy, that his case was serious.

The doctor, addressing the first of the circle, said, "You look pale and weak; I think you are the worst." "I, sir! not at all," replied the other. "I feel remarkably well just now, and indeed was never in better health." "You feel well, you rascal; why then, what are you doing here?" And the man immediately opened the door and escaped. The king was outside waiting the result, ready, if necessary, to thrash the peasant. He saw a sick man come out. "Are you cured?" he asked. "Yes, sire." The next moment another appeared. "And you?" "So am I." Well, what can I tell you? There was no one, young or old, matron or maiden, who would agree to furnish the ashes, and all left the hall pretending to be cured.

The king was delighted, and re-entered the hall to congratulate the physician. He could not cease wondering how, in so short a time, he had performed so many miracles. "Sire," replied the peasant, "I possess a charm of matchless power, and by its means I effect my cures." The king loaded him with presents, gave him money and horses, assured him of his affection, and permitted him to return to his wife on condition that when his assistance was needed, he would come without having to be beaten. The rustic took leave of the king. He had no more need to work; he no longer beat his wife; he loved her, and she him. But by the trick she played him she made him a physician in spite of himself.

Fabliaux.

SIRE HAIN AND DAME ANIEUSE.

"IT TRIPPED UP HER HEELS, AND ANIEUSE FELL IN."

SIRE HAIN was a man who had a good trade, for he excelled in mending coats and cloaks. But his wife was the most provoking and wicked woman imaginable. If he asked for pea-soup, Anieuse gave him peas. If he wanted peas, she made him pea-soup. It was exactly the same with everything else, and from morning till night nothing but quarrelling was heard in the house.

One day when a great deal of fish had come into the market, Hain, in the hope that it would be cheap, told his wife to go and buy some.

"What sort do you prefer," she asked, "salt or fresh-water fish?"

"Salt-water fish, my sweetest."

Thereupon Anieuse put a dish under her cloak. She went out and brought back spinach.

"By Jove, wife, you haven't been long," said Hain, when he saw her come in. "Well, what have you got? Dog-fish or skate?"

"Fie, fie, with your horrid stale sea-fish! You evidently think I mean to poison you. Yesterday's rain turned the fish bad. It's as dangerous as the plague. I was very nearly ill."

"What! a plague? I saw some fish this morning looking as fresh as if it had just come out of the water."

"It would have been a miracle if I could please you even for once. I've never seen such a man for grumbling and never finding things to his liking. I am beginning to lose patience. There, you beggar, go and get your own dinner, and cook it yourself. I'll have nothing to do with it."

So saying, she threw the spinach and the dish into the yard.

As you may imagine, the result was another quarrel. But after shouting a little Hain reflected for a moment, and then spoke thus—

"Look here, Anieuse. You intend to be mistress, eh? Well, I intend to be master, and as long as neither of us yields, we cannot possibly agree. Once for all, then, we must make a stand, and, as argument is useless, we must find other means."

Then he took a pair of breeches, carried them into the yard, and proposed to the woman to dispute them with him, on condition that whoever remained master of them should rule the household. She willingly consented, and in order that the victory and the rights appertaining to it might be fairly awarded, both agreed to choose witnesses of the combat—the one, Dame Aupais, the other, neighbour Simon.

Anieuse was so anxious to put an end to the dispute that she went at once herself to fetch them. They came. The cause of the dispute was explained to them. Simon, astonished, opposed the scheme, and attempted to restore peace, but in vain.

"War is declared," said the virago; "there's no way out of it. We are going to do our duty; you do yours."

When Simon saw that soft words were of no avail, he assumed the office of judge. He forbade the combatants any weapon but their hands, and with Dame Aupais took up his position in a corner of the yard, in order to watch the champions and decide on the winner.

The yard was large and offered a fine field for the fight. Anieuse, the more obstinate and perfidious of the two, led the attack with insults and blows that were unhesitatingly returned. Then she seized the breeches. Hain, too, laid hold of them. Each pulled at them, and they were soon torn. The combatants disputed the two pieces, which before long increased to many more. The fragments flew about the yard; the combatants pounced on the biggest, gained possession of them, snatched them away, and in the midst of it all, nails and fists were not idle.

Anieuse, however, found means to seize Hain by the hair, and pulled it so hard that she was on the point of throwing him down and gaining the victory.

Dame Aupais, to encourage her, shouted to her; but Simon forced her to hold her tongue, and threatened, if she said another word, to bring her also into the fray.

Meanwhile Hain had succeeded in extricating himself from his wife's grasp, and, his anger roused, had in his turn pushed her so vigorously that he almost drove her against the wall.

It chanced that behind her was a tub, which, as it had rained the day before, was full of water. In stepping back, it tripped up her heels, and Anieuse fell in. Hain

immediately left her and picked up the remains of the breeches, which he spread before the two judges as the witnesses of his triumph.

Anieuse, however, was struggling in the tub and could not get out. After many futile efforts, she was compelled to call neighbour Simon to her aid.

Before pulling her out he asked her if she owned herself beaten, and if she promised henceforth to submit to her husband, to obey him in everything, and never to do what he forbade her. At first she refused. But she took counsel with Dame Aupais, who pointed out to her that, in accordance with the laws of such combats, she could not get out of the place she was in without the permission of the conqueror; Anieuse then gave her word. They pulled her out and took her back into the room, where peace was restored.

Fabliaux.

ESTULA.

TWO brothers were early left orphans, and they suffered in addition from a terrible disease—that of poverty. I know none more difficult to cure, and none that lasts longer.

For many years the two brothers endured what usually accompanies it, cold, hunger, and thirst. Their misery became so pressing, that, lacking even bread, they were forced to think of expedients.

There lived near them a rich man, with cabbages in his garden and sheep in his stable. Necessity, which leads many men to crime, inspired them with the idea of robbing him. They set out early in the night, each armed with a sack, and one went to force the stable door and steal a sheep, and the other to cut cabbages in the garden.

The people of the house had not yet gone to bed. The master heard a noise.

"There's something the matter," he said to his son. "Go and see what it is, and call the dog. Isn't he in the yard?"

The boy went out and began to shout, "Estula!"¹ That was the dog's name.

The thief who was picking the lock thought his brother was speaking to him, and answered, "Yes, here I am."

But on the other hand the boy thought it was the dog that spoke, and in a great fright he returned to the house.

"Father, father!"

"Well, what's wrong?"

"Oh, sir! it was the dog that spoke."

"The dog that spoke!"

"Yes, indeed, it's quite certain. I heard him. If you don't believe me, come and see for yourself."

The father went to see. He likewise called the dog by his name; and the thief, still thinking it was his brother who needed his assistance, replied, "One moment, I've just done. I'm coming."

I leave you to imagine if in his turn the good man was alarmed. He suspected some witchcraft, and sent his son for the priest, to implore him to come with his stole and holy water. The priest hastily put on his surplice and accompanied the child. To reach the house the quicker, they took the way through the garden where the man was cutting cabbages. He, hearing footsteps, and thinking it was his brother, cried out, "Have you got him?" "Yes," replied the boy, who thought he was speaking to his father. "Very well, bring him here," rejoined the other; "I've a sharp knife, and we'll kill him at once for fear he should cry out."

¹ *Es-tu là* is the French for "Are you there?"

Imagine the priest's terror at these words. He thought he was betrayed, threw the holy water on the ground, and made his escape, even leaving his surplice behind. In his flight it accidentally caught on a bush. The man with the cabbages, perceiving something white in the darkness, went to see what it could be, and found the surplice, of which he took possession. He had long ago filled his sack, and was only waiting for his brother, to depart. He at length joined him with a sheep, and they returned home, where the adventure of the surplice vastly amused them. They had not laughed for many a long day, and now made up the arrears.

Fabliaux.

*HOW A PEASANT GAINED HEAVEN BY
PLEADING.*

A PEASANT died, and no one either in heaven or hell was informed of the circumstance. Such a thing has probably never happened to any other person. I cannot tell you how it came about. I only know that by a strange chance neither angel nor devil was present to claim his soul at the moment it left his body. Alone then and trembling the villager departed without a guide, and first, since no one offered any opposition, took the road to heaven. As he was not too well acquainted with the way, he feared to lose himself; but luckily he saw the archangel Michael leading one of the elect, and he silently followed him at a distance, and so well, that they all reached the gate at exactly the same time.

St. Peter, hearing a knocking, opened the gate for the beautiful angel and his companion. But when he saw the rustic all alone, said, "Go away; no one is allowed to enter here without a guide, and peasants are not wanted."

"Peasant yourself," replied the countryman. "It's very fitting for you who denied our Lord three times to dismiss from a place where you have no right to be, honest men who maybe have every right. That's nice behaviour for an apostle, and God is much honoured in entrusting the keys of heaven to such a man's keeping."

"HE SAW THE RUSTIC ALL ALONE."

Peter, little accustomed to such treatment, was so astounded that he withdrew, speechless. He met St. Thomas, to whom he naïvely recounted the insult he had just received. "Leave the matter to me," said Thomas; "I'll find the rustic and soon dispose of him." He went, treated the unfortunate man very harshly, and asked him how he dared be insolent enough to come to the dwelling-place of the elect, where only martyrs and believers were admitted. "Why, then, are you here?" rejoined the

peasant. "You were wanting in faith, you refused to believe in the resurrection until you had touched the wounds of the resuscitated man with your own hands. Since unbelievers are admitted, surely I, who have always been a faithful believer, may enter." Thomas bent his head at the reproach, and, without further delay, returned full of shame to find Peter.

St. Paul, passing by chance and hearing their laments, laughed at them. "You don't know how to talk to him," he said, and swearing by his chief that he would avenge them and rid them of the peasant, he haughtily went up to him and took him by the arm to turn him out. "Such conduct doesn't surprise me," said the villager. "Persecutor and spy of the Christians, you were always a tyrant. To change your nature God was forced to show you all his power in miracles, and yet he couldn't cure you of being a mischief-maker, nor prevent you from quarrelling with Peter, who was, however, your master. Bald old man, go back; and although I am not related to St. Stephen, nor to any of the honest men you so villainously caused to be massacred, learn that I know you thoroughly."

Notwithstanding the assurance with which he had undertaken the task, Paul was disconcerted. He returned to the two apostles, who, seeing him as annoyed as they were, determined to complain to God.

Peter, as chief, was spokesman. He demanded justice, and ended by saying that the peasant's insolence had so greatly shamed him that he dared not return to his post, if he was likely to find him still there. "Well, I'll go myself and speak to him," said God. They all went to the gate. God called the rustic, who was still waiting, and asked him how it was he had come without a guide, and how he could have the impertinence to stay there after insulting the apostles. "Sire, they attempted to drive me away, and I thought I had as good a right to enter

as they had; for I've never denied you, I've never lost faith in your holy word, nor imprisoned nor stoned any one. I am aware that no one is received here without being judged. Well, I submit. Judge me. You caused me to be born into poverty. I have borne my troubles without complaint, and have worked hard all my life. I was told to believe in your Gospel, and I did believe in it. I was adjured to do all manner of things, and I did them. In short, I tried to live honestly, and have nothing to reproach myself with during the days you allowed me on earth. Did poor men come to me? I gave them shelter, let them sit by my fireside, and shared with them the bread earned by the sweat of my brow. You know, Sire, if I am lying the least little bit. Directly I fell ill I confessed my sins and took the sacrament. Our priest always told us that he who lived and died thus would go to heaven, and therefore I come to ask your permission to enter. Besides, you yourself are responsible for my entrance here in summoning me to reply to your questions. Here I am, and here I stay. You said in your Gospel, don't you remember: *He came in, let him remain*, and you are incapable of breaking your word." "You have gained your cause by your pleading," said God. "Since you can speak so well, you may stay! That's the result of going to a good school."

Fabliaux.

ST. PETER AND THE TROUBADOUR.

THERE lived once at Sens a fiddler, the best fellow on earth, who for a treasure would not have quarrelled with a child, but a man of as wild and irregular a life as it was possible to find. He spent his days in gaming or in the tavern, if not in worse places. If he earned any

money, he immediately took it there ; if he had nothing, he pawned his fiddle. Thus, always ragged, always penniless, often bare-foot, and in frost and rain with nothing but a shirt for clothing, you would have pitied him. In spite of all, merry, contented, his head encircled with a wreath of green leaves, he sang unceasingly, and only desired from God one thing, to make every day in the week a Sunday.

At last he died. A young devil, a novice, who for a month past had been seeking a soul to appropriate, and so far, in spite of all his trouble, had met with no success, being by chance at hand when our fiddler breathed his last, took him on his back, and in high glee carried him to hell.

It was the hour when the demons returned from their hunt. Lucifer was seated on his throne to see them arrive, and as they entered each placed at his feet what they had taken during the day. One, a priest; another, a thief; some, champions killed in the lists; others, bishops, abbots, monks; all, persons surprised at the moment they least expected it. The dusky monarch stopped his captives for a moment to examine them, and then gave the signal for them to be thrust into the caldron. When the hour was over, he ordered the gates to be closed, and asked if every one had returned. "Yes," was the reply, "all except one poor fool, very green and simple, who went forth a month ago, and whom it is unnecessary to wait for, since he will probably be ashamed to return empty-handed."

The mocker had hardly finished speaking when the young devil arrived, carrying his ragged fiddler, whom he humbly presented to his sovereign. "Draw near," said Lucifer to the troubadour. "What are you? thief, spy, ribald?" "No, sir; I was a fiddler, and you see in me one who possesses all the knowledge a man can have on the earth. All the same, I suffered much pain up there,

not to say poverty. But if you are going to give me a lodging, I will sing, if that will amuse you." "Yes, indeed, songs; music's just the thing that I miss here. Listen: you see that caldron, and you are quite naked. I command you to keep it boiling, and see there's always a good fire." "Willingly, sir; at any rate, I'm certain of never feeling cold again." Our hero immediately went to his post, and for some time acquitted himself admirably of his task.

But one day, when Lucifer had summoned all his companions for a general hunt on earth, before departing he called his stoker. "I am going out," he said, "and leave all my prisoners in your charge; but remember, you pay for them with your head if on my return one is missing." "Sir, depart in peace; I shall be responsible for them. You will find everything in order on your return, and will recognise my trustworthiness." "Well, take good care; everything's at stake; for if anything goes wrong, I shall have you burned alive."

That was the moment St. Peter had been waiting for. From the heights of heaven he had heard the conversation, and was lying in wait to profit by it. As soon as the demons had gone, he disguised himself, put on a long black beard with carefully-combed moustaches, went down into hell, and accosted the fiddler: "Well, friend, shall we have a game? Here's a board and dice, and good money to win." So saying he held up a big purse filled with coins. "Sir," replied the other, "it's no use your coming here to tempt me, for I swear to you, by my God, that I've nothing in the world but the ragged shirt you see before you." "Well, if you've no money, I'll be quite content to play for souls, and it'll be a long time before they are lacking." "God forbid, that'll never do. I know what I promised my master when he departed. You must find some other expedient, for I shall never agree to that." "Fool! he'll never know anything

"SIR, IT'S NO USE YOUR COMING HERE TO TEMPT ME."

about it. In such a vast multitude of souls what difference can five or six more or less make? Look at these brand new coins. It's in your power to line your pockets with some of them. Take advantage of your opportunity, for if I once go, I shall never return. There, I stake twenty sous; bring one of the souls."

The wretched man looked at the dice with all his eyes. He took them in his hands, put them down, and then took them up again. At last he could resist no longer, and agreed to play a round or two, but only for one soul at a time, fearing to run the risk of losing too much. "Done!" replied the apostle, "for one, then, fair or dark, male or female, I don't care which; I leave the choice to you; let's begin." The troubadour went in search of a few of the damned, and St. Peter spread out his coins. They sat down beside the furnace and commenced the game. But the saint played without any risk, and always won. The troubadour, to retrieve his losses, doubled and trebled the stakes; but in vain, he steadily went on losing.

Unable to understand such a run of ill-luck, he suspected his adversary of cheating, grew angry, declared he would not pay, and treated the apostle as a sharper and a rogue. He denied the charge, and taking each other by the hair, they began to fight. Fortunately the saint was the stronger, and the other, after enduring a sound thrashing, was obliged to ask for mercy. He then proposed to commence again, provided the former game should count for nothing, promising, of course, to pay in the future, and even offering to allow St. Peter to choose from the caldron whatever he liked, rogues, monks, wenches, knights, priests, peasants, canons or canonesses. Peter had the word cheat on his lips, and roundly reproached the troubadour; but he made so many apologies that at last the saint gave in, and the game recommenced.

The fiddler had no better luck this time than the last, and

I have told you the reason. He grew angry, staked a hundred souls, a thousand souls at a time, changed dice, changed places, and continued losing all the same. At last, in despair, he got up, left off playing, cursing the evil fortune that followed him even to hell. Peter then approached the caldron to choose and take out the souls he had won. They each entreated him in pity to make them one of the elect. Their cries were deafening. The angry fiddler rushed up, determined to win or to lose everything, and, lost to every sense of prudence, proposed to play for all that remained. The apostle was only too delighted. The all-important last stake was decided on the very spot, and I need not tell you the anxiety of the souls who were thus spectators of the game. Fortunately, their fate was in the hands of a man of miracles. He won them all, and immediately set out with them for paradise.

A few hours later Lucifer returned with his troop. But what was his grief to find the fires extinguished, the caldron empty, and not one single soul of all the thousand millions he had left. He summoned the stoker: "Rascal, what have you done with my prisoners?" "Ah, sir, let me kneel before you; have mercy on me; I will tell you all." And then he related his adventure, confessing that he had no better luck in hell than he had had on earth. "What blockhead brought this gamester?" said the angry prince. "Let him have a good thrashing." The little devil who had made such an unfortunate gift was at once seized, and so soundly whipped that he promised never again to have anything to do with a fiddler. "Turn out the music-maker," added the monarch. "God, who likes joy and gladness, may take all such into his heaven. I never wish to hear another word about them."

The troubadour asked for nothing better. He quickly took himself off, and came running to heaven, where

St. Peter welcomed him with open arms, and let him enter with the others.

Therefore, fiddlers and troubadours, rejoice, for you have every reason. Hell is not for you. He who played against St. Peter closed its gates to you.

Fabliaux.

THE ASS'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

A PRIEST had an ass in his service for twenty years. At last the creature, after working hard and gaining his master a great deal of money, died of old age. And the priest, out of gratitude, buried him in his own churchyard. The matter came to the ears of the bishop, a man who loved good cheer, and was consequently very extravagant. "So much the better," he said, when he was informed of the affair; "we will impose a fine. Quick, order this enemy of God to come before me."

The priest appeared. "Draw near, you pagan renegade," said the bishop. "It's you then who, to shame the Holy Church, have had the insolence to bury an ass among Christians. Who ever heard of like abomination? The Lord compels me, I intend to get accurate information, and if you are convicted of the crime, I shall condemn you to end your days in prison." "Gentle sir," replied the priest, "such wicked rumours easily get about. To prove myself guiltless I only ask a day's delay." In making this request he knew very well what he was about, and was sure in advance that he would be acquitted.

The next day, before leaving home, he put twenty pounds in his belt and presented himself before the bishop, who asked if he brought good excuses. "Yes, sire, and you'll agree that there's no need to condemn me. Listen to me a moment, and if you find me guilty I submit to my

"HE PUT TWENTY POUNDS IN HIS BELT AND PRESENTED HIMSELF
BEFORE THE BISHOP."

punishment. The ass you've been told of served me for twenty years. He was a faithful animal, a hard worker, and very economical. Every year he put by twenty sous as a resource for his old age. At length, on his death-bed, finding that he had saved twenty pounds, he disposed of them by will, and begs you to accept them in the hope that your prayers will deliver his soul from hell." At the same moment the priest drew the twenty pounds from his belt and handed them to the prelate. "May God," said the bishop, stretching out his hand, "forgive the defunct all his sins, and take his soul into paradise. Amen."

Rutebœuf (born 1230).

THE LAND OF COKAIGNE.¹

LIST, for now my tale begins,—
 How to rid me of my sins,
 Once I journey'd far from home
 To the gate of holy Rome :
 There the Pope, for my offence,
 Bade me straight in penance thence,
 Wandering onward, to attain
 The wondrous land that hight Cokaigne.
 Sooth to say, it was a place
 Bless'd with Heaven's especial grace ;
 For every road and every street
 Smok'd with food for man to eat :
 Pilgrims there might halt at will,
 There might sit and feast their fill,
 In goodly bowers that lin'd the way,
 Free for all, and nought to pay.
 Through that blissful realm divine
 Roll'd a sparkling flood of wine :

¹ The origin of Rabelais's "Thelema and Papimanie."

Clear the sky, and soft the air,
For eternal spring was there ;
And, all around, the groves among,
Countless dance, and ceaseless song.

Strife, and ire, and war, were not;
 For all was held by common lot;
 And every lass that sported there
 Still was kind, and still was fair;
 Free to each as each desir'd,
 And quitted when the year expired;
 For, once the circling seasons past,
 Surest vows no more might last.
 But the chiefest, choicest treasure
 In that land of peerless pleasure,
 Was a well, to saine the sooth,
 Clep'd the living well of youth.
 There, had numb and feeble age
 Cross'd you in your pilgrimage,
 In those wondrous waters pure
 Lav'd awhile you found a cure :
 Lustihead and youth appears
 Numbering now but twenty years.

Fourteenth Century.

A CONFESSION.

I LOVE the court by wit and worth adorned,
 A man whose errors are abjured and mourned,
 My gentle mistress by a streamlet clear,
 Pleasure, a handsome present, and good cheer.
 I love fat salmon, richly dressed at noon;
 I love a faithful friend both late and soon.

I hate small gifts, a man that's poor and proud,
 The young who talk incessantly and loud;
 I hate in low-bred company to be,
 I hate a knight that has not courtesy.
 I hate a lord with arms to war unknown,
 I hate a priest or monk with beard o'ergrown;

A doting husband, or a tradesman's son,
 Who apes a noble, and would pass for one.
 I hate much water and too little wine ;
 A prosperous villain, and a false divine ;
 A niggard lout who sets the dice aside ;
 A flirting girl all frippery and pride ;
 A cloth too narrow, and a board too wide ;
 Him who exalts his handmaid to his wife,
 And her who makes her groom her lord for life ;
 The man who kills his horse with wanton speed,
 And him who fails his friend in time of need.

The Monk of Montaudon (15th century?).

BALLAD OF THE WOMEN OF PARIS.

I.

THOUGH folk deem women young and old
 Of Venice and Genoa well eno'
 Favoured with speech, both glib and bold,
 On lovers' messages for to go.
 I, at my peril, I say no.
 Though Lombards and Romans patter well,
 Savoyards, Florentines, less or mo',—
 The women of Paris bear the bell.

II.

The Naples women (so we are told)
 Are pleasant enough of speech, and so
 Are Prussians and Austrians. Some folk hold
 Greeks and Egyptians sweet of show :
 But hail they from Athens or Grand Cairo,
 Castille or Hungary, heaven or hell,
 For dulcet speech, over friend and foe,
 The women of Paris bear the bell.

III.

Switzers nor Bretons know how to scold,
Nor Provence nor Gascony women : lo !
Two fishfags in Paris the bridge that hold,
Would slang them dumb in a minute, I trow.
Picardy, England, Lorraine, St. Lô
(Is that enough places for one spell ?),
Valenciennes, Calais, search high and low,
The women of Paris bear the bell.

ENVOI.

Prince, to the Paris ladies we owe
The prize of sweet speech ; for they excel :
They may talk of Italians ; but this I know,
The women of Paris bear the bell.

Villon (1431-1485).

BALLAD OF PROVERBS.

I.

GOATS scratch until they spoil their bed :
 Pitcher to well too oft we send :
 The iron's heated till it's red,
 And hammered till in twain it rend :
 The tree grows as the twig we bend :
 Men journey till they disappear
 Even from the memory of a friend :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.¹

II.

Some mock until their hearts do bleed :
 Some are so frank that they offend :
 Some waste until they come to need :
 A promised gift is ill to spend :
 Some love God till from church they trend :
 Wind changes till the sky is clear :
 Till forced to borrow do we lend :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

III.

Dogs fawn on us till them we feed :
 Song's sung until by heart it's kenned :
 Fruit's kept until it rots to seed :
 The leaguered place falls in the end :
 Folk linger till the occasion wend :
 Haste oft throws all things out of gear :
 One clips until the hold's o'erstrained :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

¹ The point of the refrain lies in the contemporary use of the word Noël (Christmas) as an exclamation in the sense of *Hurrah! Vivat!* etc.

ENVOL.

Prince, fools live so long that they mend :
They go so far that they draw near :
They're cozened till they apprehend :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

Villon.

*BALLAD OF THINGS KNOWN AND
UNKNOWN.*

I.

FLIES in the milk I know full well :
I know men by the clothes they wear :
I know the walnut by the shell :
I know the foul sky from the fair :
I know the pear-tree from the pear :
When things go well, to me is shown :
I know who work and who forbear :
I know all save myself alone.

II.

I know the pourpoint by the fell :
 And by his gown I know the frère :
 Master by varlet can I tell :
 Nuns by the veils that hide their hair :
 I know a sharper by his air :
 And fools that fat on cates have grown :
 Wines by the cask I can compare :
I know all save myself alone.

III.

I know how horse from mule to tell :
 I know the load each one can bear :
 I know both Beatrice and Bell :
 I know the hazards, odd and pair :
 I know of visions in the air :
 I know the power of Peter's throne,
 And how misled Bohemians were :¹
I know all save myself alone.

ENVOI.

Prince, I know all things : fat and spare,
 Ruddy and pale, to me are known ;
 And Death that endeth all our care ;
I know all save myself alone.

Villon.

¹ Supposed to be an allusion to the Hussite movement.

*BALLAD AND ORISON FOR THE SOUL OF
MASTER COTARD.*

I.

NOAH, that first the vine planted ;
Lot, too, that in the grot drank high.

Architriclinus, learn'd in the bowl,—
I pray you all three to set in the sky
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.

II.

He was of your lineage born and bred ;
He drank of the best and dearest aye ;
Though he'd never a penny to stand him in stead,
The best of all topers he was, say I.
Never good liquor found him shy ;
None could the pot from his grasp cajole.
Fair lords, do not suffer in hell to sigh
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.

III.

I've seen him oft, when he went to bed,
Totter, as one that was like to die ;
And once he gat him a bump on the head
'Gainst a butcher's stall, as he staggered by.
Brief, one might journey far and nigh
For a better fellow the cup to trowl.
Let him in, if you hear him the wicket try :
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.

ENVOI.

He scarce could spit, he was always so dry ;
 And ever ' My throat's like a red-hot coal !'
 Parched up with thirst, he was wont to cry :
 Good Master Cotard, honest soul.

Villon.

EPITAPH

In ballad form that Villon made for himself and his companions, expecting no better than to be hanged in their company.

I.

BROTHERS that after us on life remain,
 Let not your hearts towards us be of stone ;
 For if to pity us poor wights you're fain,
 God shall the rather grant you benison.
 You see us six, the gibbet hereupon :
 As to the flesh that we too well have fed,
 'Tis all devoured and rotted, shred by shred.
 Let none make merry of our piteous case,
 Whose crumbling bones the life long since hath fled:
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace !

II.

Yea, we conjure you, look not with disdain,
 Brothers, on us, that we to death were done
 By justice. Well you know, the saving grain
 Of sense springs not in every mother's son :
 Wherefore, pray for us, now that we're undone,

"EXPECTING NO BETTER THAN TO BE HANGED IN THEIR COMPANY."

To Christ, the son of Mary's maidenhead,
 That He leave not His grace on us to shed,
 And save us from the nether torture-place.
 Let none work woe on us : we are well sped :
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace !

III.

We are all blanched and soddened of the rain,
 And eke dried up and blackened of the sun :
 Corbies and pyets have our eyes out-ta'en,
 And plucked our beard and hair out, one by one.
 Whether by night or day, rest have we none :
 Now here, now there, as the wind shifts its stead,
 We swing and creak and rattle overhead,
 No thimble dinted like our bird-pecked face.
 Folk, mock us not that are forspent and dead :
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace !

ENVOI.

Prince Jesus, that o'er all art Lord and Head,
 Let us not fall into the Place of Dread ;
 But all our reckoning with the Fiend efface.
 Brothers, be warned, and shun the life we led :
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace !
Villon.

TO HIS COMPANIONS IN DEBAUCHERY.

COMPANIONS in debauchery,
 Ill souls and bodies well bestead,
 Beware of that ill sun (look ye)
 That tans a man when he is dead :

'Tis a foul death to die, I dread.
 Keep yourselves from it, so you may ;
 And let this thought stand you in stead :
 You must die, all of you, some day.

Villon.

PANURGE IN PRAISE OF DEBT.

"BUT," quoth Pantagruel, "when will you be out of debt?" "At the next ensuing term of the Greek Kalends," answered Panurge, "when all the world shall be content, and that it be your fate to become your own heir. The Lord forbid that I should be out of debt, as if, indeed, I could not be trusted. Who leaves not some leaven over night, will hardly have paste the next morning.

"Be still indebted to somebody or other, that there may be somebody always to pray for you ; that the giver of all good things may grant unto you a blessed, long, and prosperous life ; fearing, if fortune should deal crossly with you, that it might be his chance to come short of being paid by you, he will always speak good of you in every company, ever and anon purchase new creditors unto you ; to the end that through them you may make payment, and with other folks' earth fill up his ditch. When of old in the regions of the Gauls, by the institution of the Druids, the servants, slaves, and bondsmen were burned quick at the funerals and obsequies of their lords and masters ; had they not fear enough, think you, that their lords and masters should die ? For, perforce, they were to die with them for company. Did not they incessantly send up their supplications to their great god, Mercury, as likewise unto Dis, the Father of Wealth, to lengthen out their days, and preserve them long in health ? Were not they very careful to entertain

them well, punctually to look unto them, and to attend them faithfully and circumspectly? For, by those means, were they to live together at least until the hour of death. Believe me, your creditors, with a more fervent devotion, will beseech Almighty God to prolong your life, they being of nothing more afraid than that you should die. . . .

“Be pleased to represent unto your fancy another world, wherein every one lendeth, and every one oweth, all are debtors, and all creditors. Oh, how great will that harmony be which shall thereby result from the regular motion of the heavens! Methinks I hear it every whit as well as ever Plato did. What sympathy will there be amongst the elements! Oh, how delectable then unto Nature will be her own works and productions! Whilst Ceres appeareth loaden with corn, Bacchus with wines, Flora with flowers, Pomona with fruits, and Juno fair in a clear air, wholesome and pleasant. I lose myself in this high contemplation.

“Then will, among the race of mankind, be peace, love, benevolence, fidelity, tranquillity, rest, banquets, feastings, joy, gladness, gold, silver, small money, chains, rings, with other ware and chaffer of that nature, be found to trot from hand to hand. No suits at law, no wars, no strife, debate, nor wrangling; none will be there an usurer, none will be there a pinch-penny, a scrape-good wretch, or churlish, hard-hearted refuser. Good God! Will not this be the golden age in the reign of Saturn? the true idea of the Olympic regions, wherein all other virtues ceasing, charity alone ruleth, governeth, domineereth, and triumpheth! All will be fair and goodly people there, all just and virtuous. . . . Believe me, it is a divine thing to lend; to owe, an heroic virtue.

Rabelais (1495-1553).

PANURGE ASKETH COUNSEL OF PANTAGRUEL WHETHER HE SHOULD MARRY.

PANURGE prosecuted the discourse he had already broached, and therewithal fetching, as from the bottom of his heart, a very deep sigh, said, "My lord and master, you have heard the design I am upon, which is to marry. I humbly beseech you, for the affection which of a long time you have borne me, to give me your best advice therein." "Then," answered Pantagruel, "seeing you have so decreed and taken deliberation thereon, and that the matter is fully determined, what need is there of any further talk thereof, but forthwith to put into execution what you have resolved?" "Yea, but," quoth Panurge, "I would be loath to act anything therein without your counsel had thereto." "It is my judgment also," quoth Pantagruel, "and I advise you to it." "Nevertheless," quoth Panurge, "if I understood aright that it were much better for me to remain a bachelor as I am, than to run headlong upon new hare-brained undertakings of conjugal adventure, I would rather choose not to marry." Quoth Pantagruel, "Then do not marry." "Yea, but," quoth Panurge, "would you have me to solitarily drag out the whole course of my life, without the comfort of a matrimonial consort? You know it is written, *Væ soli!* and a single person is never seen to reap the joy and solace that is found with married folks." "Then marry, in the name of God," quoth Pantagruel. "But if," quoth Panurge, "my wife should be unfaithful—there are plenty such—I would grow impatient beyond all measure and mean. That is a point which troubles me sorely." "Then do not marry," quoth Pantagruel, "for without all controversy this sentence of Seneca is infallibly true: What thou to others shalt have done, others will do the like to thee." "Do you," quoth

Panurge, "aver that without all exception?" "Yes, truly," quoth Pantagruel, "without all exception." "Ho, ho!" says Panurge, "by the wrath of a little devil, his meaning is, either in this world, or in the other which is to come. But if it were the will of God, and that my destiny did unluckily lead me to marry an honest woman, who should beat me, I would be stored with more than two third parts of the patience of Job, if I were not stark mad by it, and quite distracted with such rugged dealings. . . . I could make a shift for this year to waive such molestation and disquiet, and be content to lay aside that trouble, and not to be engaged in it."

"Do not marry, then," answered Pantagruel. "Yea, but," quoth Panurge, "considering the condition wherein I now am, out of debt and unmarried; mark what I say, free from all debt, in an ill hour! for, were I deeply on the score, my creditors would be but too careful of my paternity, but being quiet, and not married, nobody will be so regardful of me, or carry towards me a love like that which is said to be in a conjugal affection. And if by some mishap I should fall sick, I would be looked to very waywardly. The wise man saith, Where there is no woman, I mean the mother of a family, and wife in the union of a lawful wedlock, the crazy and diseased are in danger of being ill-used, and of having much brabbling and strife about them: as by clear experience hath been made apparent in the persons of popes, legates, cardinals, bishops, abbots, priors, priests, and monks: but there, assure yourself, you shall not find me." "Marry, then, in the name of God," answered Pantagruel. "Your counsel," quoth Panurge, "under your correction and favour, seemeth unto me not unlike to the song of Gammer, yea-by-nay. It is full of sarcasms, mockeries, bitter taunts, nipping bobs, derisive quips, biting jerks, and contradictory iterations, the one part destroying the other. I know not," added Panurge, "which of all

your answers to lay hold on." "Good reason why," quoth Pantagruel, "for your proposals are so full of ifs and buts that I can ground nothing on them, nor pitch upon any solid and positive determination satisfactory to what is demanded by them. Are not you assured within yourself of what you have a mind to? The chief and main point of the whole matter lieth there. All the rest is merely casual, and totally dependeth upon the fatal disposition of the heavens.

"We see some so happy in the fortune of this nuptial encounter, that their family shineth, as it were, with the radiant effulgency of an idea, model, or representation of the joys of paradise; and perceive others, again, to be so unluckily matched in the conjugal yoke, that those very basest of devils which tempt the hermits that inhabit the deserts of Thebais and Montserrat, are not more miserable than they. It is therefore expedient, seeing you are resolved for once to make a trial of the state of marriage, that, with shut eyes, bowing your head, and kissing the ground, you put the business to a venture, and give it a fair hazard, in recommending the success of the residue to the disposal of Almighty God. It lieth not in my power to give you any other manner of assurance, or otherwise to certify you of what shall ensue on this your undertaking."

Rabelais.

THE STORM AT SEA.

“WE must implore, invoke, pray, beseech, and supplicate Heaven,” quoth Epistemon; “but we mustn’t stop there; we must, as Holy Writ says, co-operate with it.”

Friar John had stripped himself to his waistcoat to help the seamen. Epistemon, Ponocrates, and the rest did as much. Panurge alone sat on the deck, weeping and howling. “Odzooks!” cried Friar John. “What! Panurge playing the calf! Panurge whining! Panurge braying! Would it not become thee much better to lend us a helping hand, than to keep sitting there like a baboon and lowing like a cow?” “Be, be, be, bous, bous, bous,” returned Panurge; (he was blubbering and swallowing the water that broke over them), “Friar John, my friend, my good father, I’m drowning; I drown; I’m a dead man, my dear father in God; I’m a dead man, my friend; your valour cannot save me from this: alas! alas! we’re above E la,¹ above the pitch, out of tune, and off the hinges. Be, be, bous, bous! Alas! we’re above G Sol Re Ut. I sink, I sink, my father, my uncle, my all. The water’s got into me. I pash it in my shoes—Bous, bous, bous, pash—I drown—alas! alas! hu, hu, hu, hu, bous, bous, bobous! ho, ho! Alas! would to heaven I were in company with those good holy fathers we met this morning going to council,—so godly, so comely, so fat and happy, my friend. Holos, holos, holos! alas! ah, see there! This devilish wave (God forgive me), I mean this wave of Providence, will sink our vessel. Alas! Friar John, my father, my friend, confess me. I’m down on my knees. I confess my sins—your blessing.”

¹ A term in music.

"OH, IF I WAS BUT ON FIRM LAND, WITH SOMEBODY KICKING ME."

"Go to the devil," said Friar John. "Will you never leave off whining and snivelling? Come and help us."

"Don't swear," said Panurge, "don't swear, holy father, my friend, I beseech you. To-morrow, as much as you please. I drown. I'll give eighteen hundred thousand crowns to any one that will set me on shore. Oh, my dear friend, I confess; hear me confess; a little bit of a will or testament, at any rate."

"His will!" said Friar John. "Stir your stumps, now or never, you pitiful rascal. The poor devil's frightened out of his wits."

"Bous, bous, bous!" continued Panurge. "I sink, I die, my friends. I die in charity with all the world. Farewell! Bous, bous, bousowwanwans! St. Michael! St. Nicholas! now or never. Deliver me from this danger, and I here make a solemn vow to build you a fine large little chapel or two between Condé and Monsoreau, where neither cow nor calf shall feed. Oh, oh! pailfuls are getting down my throat—bous, bous! How devilish bitter and salt it is! Oh, you sinned just now, Friar John, you did, indeed; you sinned when you swore; think of that, my former crony!—former, I say, because it's all over with us; with you as well as with me. Oh, I sink, I sink. Oh, to be but once again on dry ground, never mind how or in what condition. Oh, if I was but on firm land, with somebody kicking me."

Rabelais.

PANTAGRUELIAN PROGNOSTICATIONS.

THIS year the stone-blind shall see but very little; the deaf shall hear but scurvily; the dumb shall not speak very plain; the rich shall be somewhat in a better case than the poor, and the healthy than the sick. As for

old age, it will be incurable this year, because of the years past. A most horrid and dreadful, virulent, malignant, catching, perverse, and odious malady shall be almost epidemical, insomuch that many shall run mad upon it, not knowing what nail to drive to keep the wolf from the door ; very often plotting, contriving, cudgelling, and puzzling their weak, shallow brains, and syllogising and prying up and down for the philosopher's stone. I quake for very fear when I think on it ; for I assure you few will escape this disease, which Averroes calls lack of money. This will be a plentiful year of all manner of good things to those who have enough. As for oats, they will be a great help to horses. I dare say there will not be much more bacon than swine. As for corn, wine, fruit, and herbs, there never was such plenty as will be now, if poor folks may have their wish.

Rabelais.

TO HIS NOSE.

FINE Nose ! whose ruby gems so many a pipe have cost
 Of white wine and of red,
 Whose colour richly shared, nor red nor violet lost,
 Hath both hues fairly spread.

Big Nose ! who thee beholds across a bumper glass
 Judges thee yet more fine :
 Thou art not like the nose of that most wretched ass
 Who water takes for wine.

A turkey-cock's red throat the most resembles thee.
 How many richest folk
 Have not so rich a nose ! To paint thee needs must be
 Very much time bespoke.

The glass the pencil was which thee illuminèd ;
The colouring was wine :
So thou wast painted, cherries not so red,
During that thirst of mine.

Some say wine hurts the eyes, but who gives heed to those?
Wine is a curious
Good medicine for my ills ; both windows I would lose
Rather than all the house.

Olivier Basselin (15th century).

VAU DE VIRE.

ADAM (notorious this, I think)
Had not been in such sorry state
If when so fatally he ate,
He rather taken had to drink.

Which is the cause why I avoid
To be a gourmand in my food ;
'Tis true that I know what is good
In wine, when wine is unalloy'd.

So that whenever I may sit
In some repast-expecting nook,
I far more curiously look
At the buffet than at the spit.

The eye marks what the heart holds dear ;
Too much I may have look'd upon
A full glass : if not emptied soon
It will not be a glass of Vire.

Olivier Basselin.

TO gallop off to town post-haste,
So oft, the times I cannot tell ;
To do vile deed, nor feel disgraced,—
Friar Lubin will do it well.

But a sober life to lead,
To honour virtue and pursue it,
That's a pious, Christian deed,—
Friar Lubin cannot do it.

'To mingle, with a knowing smile,
The goods of others with his own,
And leave you without cross or pile,
Friar Lubin stands alone.
To say 'tis yours is all in vain,
If once he lays his finger to it ;
For as to giving back again,
Friar Lubin cannot do it.

With flattering words and gentle tone,
To woo and win some guileless maid,
Cunning pander need you none,—
Friar Lubin knows the trade.
Loud preacheth he sobriety,
But as for water, doth eschew it ;
Your dog may drink it,—but not he ;
Friar Lubin cannot do it.

ENVOI.

When an evil deed's to do,
Friar Lubin is stout and true ;
Glimmers a ray of goodness through it,
Friar Lubin cannot do it.

Clément Marot (1495–1544).

*ON THE SMILES OF MADEMOISELLE
D'ALLEBRET.*

TRULY she has this alabaster neck,
This winsome utterance, these lovely eyes,
This sweet complexion that has ne'er a fleck ;
But oh, this merry little smile outvies
All other charms I ween. Where'er she hies
She stirs at will all men who turn to see,
And, if dull thoughts do so much sadden me
That I am stricken low by Death, ah, then
It only needs the little smile that she
Now kills me with to give me life again.

Clément Marot.

IN PARIS.

HERE in Paris, city free,
One day, passing melancholy,
I into alliance fell
With the gayest damosel
That e'er came from Italy.

She is seized of honesty,
And I think (my fantasy)
Is no fairer damosel
Here in Paris.

I'll not name her here to thee ;
Only my sweet friend is she :
For the alliance thus befell,—
A kiss I had of the damosel,
Without thought of infamy,
Here in Paris.

Clément Marot.

ABOUT A LEARNED DOCTOR.

A LEARNED doctor, on his way to lecture in college, met a herd of oxen (or the herd of oxen met him), under the charge of a butcher's man. One of the said oxen, as the learned doctor went by on his mule, pushed rather close to his gown, and he began at once to shout: "Help! the wicked ox, he has killed me! I am dead!" At those cries a large crowd gathered, for he was well known, since he had not left Paris for twenty or thirty years. And the people hearing his shrieks thought that he must be dreadfully hurt. One supported him on one side, another on the other, for fear he should fall off his mule. And between his loud shrieks he said to his *famulus*, whose name was Corneille: "Come here! Oh, God! Go to the college and tell them I am dead, that an ox killed me, and that I cannot give my lecture; it must be put off." The college was much distressed at the news, and so were all the learned faculty. And forthwith some went as deputies to see him, and found him lying on a bed with the barber of the place, who had bandages and ointments and everything necessary in such cases. The learned doctor complained so much of his right leg that he could not endure to have his shoes and stockings pulled off. Accordingly they were cut off. When the barber saw the leg he found no hurt or appearance of hurt whatever, although the learned doctor kept on crying out: "I'm dead, my friend; I'm dead!" And when the barber put his hand on it, he cried still louder: "Oh! you're killing me; I'm dead!" "Where does it hurt you most?" asked the barber. "Can't you see?" he said. "An ox killed me, and he asks where it wounded me! Oh, I'm dead!" The barber asked: "Is it there, sir?" "No, no!" "Or there?" "No,

"SOME WENT AS DEPUTIES TO SEE HIM, AND FOUND HIM LYING ON A BED."

no." In short he found nothing. "Why, what does this mean? They can't find out where I'm hurt. Isn't it swollen?" he said to the barber. "No." "Then," said the learned doctor, "it must be the other leg, for I'm sure the ox knocked up against me." The stocking and shoe were taken off the other leg, but it was wounded as much as the first. "Bah! this barber knows nothing at all; get another." They go; another comes and finds nothing. "Good Lord!" said the learned doctor, "here's an extraordinary thing! Could an ox have knocked me thus without hurting me? Come here, Corneille. When the ox wounded me, on which side was it? Wasn't it the side nearest the wall?" "Yes, *domine*," said the *famulus*. "Then it's this leg. I told them so from the first, but they persist in laughing at me." The barber, seeing that the man was only hurt in imagination, in order to satisfy him, found a slight wound, and bound up his leg, telling him that would do for the present. "And," he continued, "when you have ascertained which leg was wounded, we will do something more."

Bonaventure des Periers (1500-1544).

ABOUT THREE BROTHERS WHO WERE NEARLY HANGED FOR THEIR LATIN.

THREE brothers of good family had spent some months in Paris, but they had wasted their time in frivolous amusements. It happened that their father summoned them home, which greatly astonished them, for they didn't know a single word of Latin. But they plotted to learn each a phrase for their salvation. To wit, the eldest learned to say: *Nos tres clerici*. The second took money for his

theme, and learned: *Pro bursa et pecunia*. The third, passing a church, kept in his head the phrase in the high mass: *Dignum et justum est*. And, thus well equipped, they departed from Paris to go and see their father, and decided that wherever they might be, no matter in what company, they would speak nothing but Latin: thus desiring to be considered the most learned clerks in the land. Now, as they were going through a wood, it happened that brigands had cut a man's throat, and, after robbing him, left him there. The magistrate and his officers came up, and found our three brothers near the place where the murder had been committed and the dead body lay. "Come," he said, "who killed this man?" Immediately the eldest, to whom belonged the honour of speaking first, said: "*Nos tres clerici*." "Oho!" said the magistrate, "and why did you do it?" "*Pro bursa et pecunia*," said the second. "Well," said the magistrate, "you'll be hanged." "*Dignum et justum est*," said the third. Thus the poor fellows would have been hanged to no purpose, had they not, when they saw the matter was serious, begun to speak their mother's Latin, and to say who they were. The magistrate, seeing they were young and rather stupid, thought they could not be the guilty men, and let them go. He continued the pursuit of the robbers who had committed the murder. But did he catch them? How should I know, my friend; I wasn't there.

Bonaventure des Periers.

THE HOUR-GLASS.

DEAR Tom, d'ye see the rill
 Of sand within this phial?
 It runs like in a mill,
 And tells time like a dial.

That sand was once Ronsard,
Till Bessy D—— look'd at him.
Her eye burnt up the bard—
He's pulverised ! an atom !

Now at this tale so horrid,
Pray learn to keep your smile hid,
For Bessy's zone is "torrid,"
And fire is in her eyelid.

Pierre Ronsard (1524-1585).

ON MARRIAGE.

IF rightly taken, marriage is the best of all human societies. We cannot live without it, and yet we do nothing but decry it. It happens, as with cages, the birds without despair of getting in, and those within despair of getting out. Socrates being asked whether it was more commodious to take a wife, or not? "Let a man take which course he will," said he, "he will be sure to repent."

That so few are to be found happy in it is a token of its preciousness and value.

Men do not marry for themselves, though they may say so ; they marry as much or more for posterity—for their family.

Good women are not to be found in dozens, as everybody knows, and especially in the duties of married life.

Montaigne (1533–1592).

*THAT THE PROFIT OF ONE MAN IS THE
INCONVENIENCE OF ANOTHER.*

DEMADES, the Athenian, condemned one of his city, whose trade it was to sell the necessaries for funeral ceremonies, upon pretence that he demanded unreasonable profit, and that that profit could not accrue to him but by the death of a great number of people. A judgment that appears to be ill-founded, forasmuch as no profit whatever could possibly be made but at the expense of another, and that by the same rule he should condemn all manner of gain of what kind soever. The merchant only thrives and grows rich by the pride, wantonness, and debauchery of youth ; the husbandman by the price and scarcity of grain ; the architect by the ruin of buildings ; lawyers and officers of justice by the suits and contentions of men ; nay, even the office of divines are derived from our death and vices ; a physician takes no pleasure in the health even of his friends, says the ancient comical Greek, nor a soldier in the peace of his country ; and so of the rest. And, which is yet worse, let every one but dive into his own bosom, and he will find his private wishes spring, and his sacred hopes grow up, at another's expense. Upon which consideration

it comes into my head, that nature does not in this swerve from her general polity ; for physicians hold that the birth, nourishment, and increase of every thing, is the corruption and dissolution of another.

Montaigne.

OF THE INCONVENIENCE OF GREATNESS.

SINCE we cannot attain unto it, let us revenge ourselves by railing at it : and yet it is not absolutely railing against anything to proclaim its defects, because they are in all things to be found, how beautiful, or how much to be coveted however. . . . Its essence is not so evidently com-
modious that a man may not without a miracle refuse it ; I find it a very hard thing to undergo misfortunes, but to be content with a competent measure of fortune, and to avoid greatness, I think a very easy matter. 'Tis, methinks, a virtue to which I, who am none of the nicest, could without any great endeavour arrive. . . . I have as much to wish for as another, and allow my wishes as much liberty and indiscretion ; but yet it never befell me to wish for either empire or royalty, for the eminency of those high and commanding fortunes. I do not aim that way, I love myself too well. When I think to grow greater, 'tis but very moderately, and by a compelled and timorous advancement such as is proper for me ; in resolution, in prudence, in health, in beauty, and even in riches too. . . . My soul is so sneaking and mean, that I measure not good fortune by the height, but by the facility. . . 'Tis a pity a man should be so potent that all things must give way to him. Fortune therein sets you too remote from society, and places you in too great a solitude. This easiness and mean facility of

making all things bow under you, is an enemy to all sorts of pleasure. This is to slide, not to go ; this is to sleep, not to live.

Montaigne.

THE CALCULATION OF LIFE.

THOU art aged ; but recount,
 Since thy early life began,
 Which may be the just amount
 Thou shouldst number of thy span:
 How much to thy debts belong,
 How much when vain fancy caught thee,
 How much to the giddy throng,
 How much to the poor who sought thee,
 How much to thy lawyer's wiles,
 How much to thy menial crew,
 How much to thy lady's smiles,
 How much to thy sick-bed due,
 How much for thy hours of leisure,
 For thy hurrying to and fro,
 How much for each idle pleasure,—
 If the list thy memory know.
 Every wasted, misspent day,
 Which regret can ne'er recall,—
 If all these thou tak'st away,
 Thou wilt find thy age but small:
 That thy years were falsely told,
 And, even now, thou art not old.

Jean Antoine de Baïf (1532-1592).

A JOURNEY TO THE CLOUDS.

(LETTER TO MDLLE. DE BOURBON.)

MADAM,—Last Friday, in the afternoon, I was tossed in a blanket;¹ because I had not made you laugh in the time that was given me. Madame de Rambouillet pronounced the sentence, at the request of her daughter and Mdle. Paulet. They had deferred the execution to the return of the princess and yourself; but they bethought themselves afterwards not to delay it any longer, and that it was very wrong to put off punishment to a time that ought to be wholly devoted to pleasure. It was useless to cry out and make resistance; the blanket was brought, and four of the lustiest fellows they could get were picked out for this service. I may venture to affirm to you, Madam, that no man was ever yet in so exalted a condition as I was, and I did not believe that Fortune would ever have raised me so high; at every toss they threw me out of sight, and sent me higher than a soaring eagle. I saw the mountains crouching far below me, the winds and clouds travel beneath my feet, discovered countries I had never seen, and seas I had never imagined. There can be nothing more diverting than to see so many things all at once, and to discover half the globe at one view. But I assure you, Madam, all this cannot be seen without some disturbance. When in the air, and certain of falling down again, the thing that frightened me most was, that when I was very high, looking down, the blanket appeared so small that I thought it impossible to fall into it, and, I confess, that caused me some trouble. But among so many different objects which at the same time struck my sight, there was one which for some moments took away my fear, and touched

¹ Tossing in a blanket was a favourite sport of that period.



"I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT FORTUNE WOULD EVER HAVE RAISED ME SO HIGH."

me with real pleasure. It was, Madam, that, being desirous of looking towards Piedmont to see what passed there, I saw you at Lyons as you crossed the Saône ; at least I saw a great light upon the water, and abundance of rays about the most charming face in the world. I could not well discern who was with you, because at that time my head was lowermost, and I believe you did not see me, for you looked another way. I made signs to you as well as I could, but, as you began to look up, I fell down again, and one of the tops of the mountain Tarara hindered you from seeing me. As soon as I came down I told them that I had seen you, and as I was going to tell them how you did, they all fell a-laughing as if 'twere a thing impossible, and immediately began to make me leap higher than before. . . . To tell you the truth, this exercise is a little too violent for one of my tender constitution.

Voiture (1598-1648).

MAXIMS.

OF nothing are we so liberal as advice.

THE misfortunes of other people we all can bear with an heroic constancy.

NONE but the contemptible are apprehensive of contempt.

WE acknowledge our faults, in order to repair, by sincerity, the hurt they do us in the opinion of others.

WE confess small faults, by way of insinuating that we have no great ones.

IN the distress of our best friends we ever find something not displeasing to us.

GRATITUDE, in most men, arises from a secret desire to receive greater favours.

THOSE on whom we confer benefits we are fonder of than those from whom we receive them.

IF lovers are never weary of each other, it is because they are always talking of themselves.

WE easily forgive those who weary us ; but we never forgive those who are wearied by us.

HYPOCRISY is the homage that vice pays to virtue.

PASSION often makes a fool of a man of sense ; sometimes it makes a man of sense a fool.

How can we expect that a friend should keep our secret, whilst we are convincing him that it is more than we can do ourselves ?

WE choose rather to talk ill of ourselves than not to talk at all.

QUARRELS would never be lasting were the fault only on one side.

La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680).

ANECDOTES.

A MAN said : "Cicero must have been extremely fond of his fifth brother ; he addresses so many of his compositions, *ad Quintum fratrem*."

A WIFE, weeping for her husband, said : "Alas ! he was always telling me to go to the devil ; but he's gone there first."

A DRESSMAKER, named Madame Colin, put her child out to nurse, and paid by the day. It was suggested

to her that she would find it much cheaper to pay by the month. "You are mistaken," she replied. "You've no idea how quickly the months come round."

A DENTIST'S apprentice took out two teeth instead of one from a patient. The man loudly remonstrated. "Be quiet," said the apprentice. "If my master knows it, he'll make you pay for both."

LA GROSSETIÈRE, a man who never complained, showed great forbearance on a like occasion. Dupont, the dentist, took out a sound tooth in mistake for a bad one. He only said, "This time pull out the one that hurts me."

M. DE SAINTES related how he was one night awoken by a pistol shot in his room. "What's that?" "Oh, sir! I was afraid the mouse would wake you, and so I killed it."

Tallemant des Réaux (1619-1692).

THE ROMANTIC LADIES.

(LES PRECIEUSES RIDICULES.)

Gorgibus. Tell me, pray, what you've done to these gentlemen that they depart so coldly. Did I not charge you to receive them as persons that I intended for your husbands?

Magdalen. Dear father, how can you imagine for one moment that we should give any heed to such irregular proceedings?

Cathos. Why, uncle, how could a woman of the most meagre intelligence reconcile herself to their persons?

Gorg. What do you see in them to find fault with?

Mag. Fine gallantry is theirs, indeed! What! to begin immediately with matrimony!

Gorg. With what would you have 'em begin? Is not such a way of acting one which both of you have reason to approve of as well as I? Can anything be more polite? and is not the holy tie they desire a proof of their honourable designs?

Mag. Oh, father! what you say is extremely under-bred. It makes me ashamed to hear you talk in that manner. You should try to acquire a finer air.

Gorg. I've nothing to do with the air nor the song. I tell you that matrimony is an holy and a sacred thing; and to begin with that is to act honourably.

Mag. Lord! were the whole world like you, a romance would be soon ended! What a fine thing it would have been if Cyrus had immediately espoused Mandana, and if Aronce had been married in all haste to Clelia!¹

Gorg. What is she talking about?

Mag. Here's my cousin, father, will tell you as well as I, that a woman ought never to get married till after other adventures. A lover, to be agreeable, must be able to utter fine sentiments, to sigh forth soft, tender, and passionate words; and his addresses must be according to the rules. In the first place, he should behold, either at church, or in the park, or at some public ceremony, the person of whom he becomes enamoured; or else, he should be fatally introduced to her by a relative or a friend, and go from her melancholy and pensive. He conceals his passion for some time from the beloved object, but, however, pays her several visits, at which some discourse about gallantry never fails to be brought forward in order to exercise the wits of all the company. The day comes for him to declare himself, which usually should be done in a garden, while the company is at a distance. This declaration is followed by an immediate resentment, shown

¹ Characters in Mdlle. de Scudéry's romances, which were the fashionable reading of the time.

by our heightened colour, and which, for a while, banishes the lover from our presence. He afterwards finds the way to pacify us, to accustom us insensibly to listen to his passion, and to draw from us that confession which causes so much trouble. Then follow the adventures; the rivals that thwart an established inclination, the persecutions of fathers, the jealousies arising from false appearances, the complainings, the despair, the elopement, and its consequences. Thus are things carried on in a handsome manner, and these are the rules that cannot be dispensed with in a genteel piece of gallantry. But to come point-blank to the conjugal union! to make no love but by making marriage contract, and take a romance by the tail! Once more, dear father, nothing can be duller than such a proceeding, and I'm sick at heart with the mere idea.

Gorg. What the devil do you mean by this nonsense? This is a towering style, indeed!

Cathos. In short, uncle, my cousin speaks the truth. How can one receive people well whose courtship is all an impropriety? I'll lay a wager they have never seen the map of Tenderness,¹ and that fond epistles, little disquietudes, polite letters, and sprightly verses are regions unknown to them. Don't you observe their whole bearing shows it; and that they have nothing of the air which gives one a good opinion of people at first sight? To come upon a love-visit with a leg entirely unadorned; a hat destitute of feathers; a head with the locks irregular; and a coat that endures an indigence of ribbons—heavens! what lovers are these! What a stinginess in dress! What a barrenness of conversation! It's over with them directly; they can't keep it up at all. I took notice, likewise, that their neckcloths were not made by a good workwoman, and

¹ The famous “Carte du Tendre” in *Clélie*.

that their breeches were not big enough by more than half a foot.

Gorg. I think they are both mad, for I can't understand anything of this gibberish. Cathos, and you Magdalen——

Mag. Ah! pray, father, leave off those strange names and call us by some other.

Gorg. What d'ye mean by those strange names? Are they not your Christian names?

Mag. Lord! how vulgar you are! for my own part, one thing I wonder at is how you could possibly get such a sprightly girl as I. Did ever anybody in a beautiful style talk of Cathos or of Magdalen? and must you not acknowledge that either of these names would be enough to disgrace the finest romance in the world?

Cathos. Really, uncle, a delicate ear suffers extremely from the sound of those words; and the name of Polixena, which my cousin has chosen, and that of Amintha, which I give myself, have an agreeableness which you must acknowledge.

Gorg. Hark'ee, there needs but one word. I don't know that you have other names than what were given you by your godfathers and godmothers; and as for those gentlemen of whom we speak, I am acquainted both with their families and their fortunes, and positively resolve that they shall be your husbands. I'm tired of keeping you upon my hands, and the care of a couple of girls is somewhat too weighty a charge for a man of my years.

Cathos. For myself, uncle, all I can say is, that I think matrimony a mighty shocking thing.

Mag. Give us leave to take breath a little amongst the *beau monde* of Paris, where we are but just arrived. Permit us to weave our romance at leisure, and don't hasten on the conclusion so much.

Gorg. (aside). There's no question of it; they're quite distracted.
(*Exit.*)

"A VALET DISGUISED AS A NOBLEMAN.

Cathos. Lord! my dear; how is thy father immersed in matter! how gross is his understanding! and what a gloominess overcasts his soul!

Mag. What can I do, my dear? I'm ashamed for him.

Marot. Here's a footman asks if you're at home, and says his master desires to see you.

Mag. Learn, you fool, to express yourself a little less vulgarly. Say, "Here's an attendant inquires if it is commodious for you to become visible."

Marot. I don't understand Latin, mistress, and haven't learnt Flossophy out of "Cyrus," as you have done.

Mag. Impertinent creature! how can this be endured! And who is the master of this footman?

Marot. He told me 'twas the Marquis de Mascarille.

Mag. Ah, my dear, a marquis! a marquis! Well, tell him we are visible. This is certainly some wit who has heard us talked of.

Cathos. Undoubtedly, my dear.

Mag. He must be received below in the parlour rather than in our chamber; let's adjust our hair a little, and maintain our character. Come in hither, quickly, and hold to us the Counsellor of the Graces.

Marot. O' my faith, I can't tell what sort of beast that is; you must talk like a Christian if you'd have me know your meaning.

Cathos. Bring us the looking-glass, you ignorant wretch! and take care not to sully its beauty by the communication of your image.

Magdalen. It must be a great pleasure to see one's self in print.

Mascarille (*a valet disguised as a nobleman, and a man of wit*). Without doubt; but now I think on't, I must tell you an extempore that I made yesterday at a Duchess's, a

friend of mine, whom I was visiting ; for I am devilishly ready at extempores.

Cathos. An extempore is certainly the touchstone of wit.

Mas. Listen, then.

Mag. We do, with all our ears.

Mas. Oh ! oh ! quite off my guard was I ;
 Whilst no harm thinking,
 You
 I view ;
 Slyly your eyes
 My heart surprise ;
 Stop thief, stop thief, stop thief, I cry.

Cathos. Ah ! my stars ! this is carried to the utmost pitch of gallantry.

Mas. All I do has an air of the gentleman, it does not savour of the pedant.

Mag. It is distant from that above two thousand leagues.

Mas. Did you note the beginning, *Oh ! oh !* This is extraordinary, *oh ! oh !* like a man that bethinks himself all at once, *oh ! oh !* The surprise, *oh ! oh !*

Mag. Ay, I think that *oh ! oh !* admirable.

Mas. This is nothing, as it were.

Cathos. Oh ! my stars ! what's that you say ? Such sorts of things as these cannot be enough esteemed.

Mag. No doubt on it, and I would rather have written that *oh ! oh !* than an epic poem.

Mas. Egad, you've good taste.

Mag. Eh ! I've not an exceeding bad one.

Mas. But don't you admire also, *Quite off my guard was I—quite off my guard was I.* I minded nothing of the matter ; a natural way of speaking. *Quite off my guard was I—whilst no harm thinking ;* whilst innocently, without malice, like a poor sheep, you I view ; that is to say, I amuse myself with considering, with observing, with

contemplating you. *Slyly* your eyes—— What think you of that word *slyly*; isn't it well chosen?

Cathos. Perfectly well.

Mas. *Slyly*, cunningly; it seems as it were a cat coming to catch a mouse, *slyly*.

Mag. Nothing can be better.

Mas. *My heart surprise*; snatch it away, force it from me. *Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!* Would you not imagine a man were crying out, and running after a thief to seize him? *Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!*

Mag. It must be owned that this has a witty and gallant turn.

Molière (1622–1673).

THE CIT TURNED GENTLEMAN.

(LE BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME.)

The Philosophy-Master. What have you a mind to learn?

M. Jourdain. Everything I can, for I have all the desire in the world to be a scholar, and it vexes me that my father and mother had not made me study all the sciences when I was young.

The Phil.-Master. It's a very reasonable feeling. *Nam, sine doctrina, vita est quasi mortis imago.* You understand that, and are acquainted with Latin, of course?

M. Jour. Yes; but act as if I were not acquainted with it. Tell me what it means.

The Phil.-Master. It means that *without learning life is as it were an image of death.*

M. Jour. That same Latin's in the right.

The Phil.-Master. Don't you know some principles, some rudiments of science?

M. Jour. Oh! yes, I can read and write. . . But now

M. JOURDAIN: "ON MY CONSCIENCE, I HAVE SPOKEN PROSE THESE FORTY YEARS WITHOUT KNOWING IT."

I must confide a secret to you. I'm in love with a person of quality, and I should be glad if you would help me to write something to her in a short *billet-doux*, which I'll drop at her feet.

The Phil.-Master. Very well.

M. Jour. That will be gallant, won't it?

The Phil.-Master. Undoubtedly. Is it verse you wish to write to her?

M. Jour. No, no, none of your verse.

The Phil.-Master. You would only have prose?

M. Jour. No, I would neither have verse nor prose.

The Phil.-Master. It must be one or the other.

M. Jour. Why so?

The Phil.-Master. Because, sir, there's nothing to express oneself by but prose or verse.

M. Jour. Is there nothing, then, but prose or verse?

The Phil.-Master. No, sir; whatever is not prose is verse, and whatever is not verse is prose.

M. Jour. And when one talks what may that be, then?

The Phil.-Master. Prose.

M. Jour. How? When I say, "Nicole, bring me my slippers and give me my nightcap," is that prose?

The Phil.-Master. Yes, sir.

M. Jour. On my conscience, I have spoken prose above these forty years without knowing it; and I am hugely obliged to you for informing me of this.

M. Jour. (to his wife). I'm ashamed of your ignorance. For example, do you know what it is you now speak?

Mme. Jour. Yes, I know that what I speak is right, and that you ought to think of living in another manner.

M. Jour. I don't talk of that. I ask you what the words are that you now speak?

Mme. Jour. They are words that have a good deal of sense in them, and your conduct is by no means such.

M. Jour. I don't talk of that, I tell you. I ask you what it is that I now speak to you, which I say this very moment?

Mme. Jour. Mere stuff.

M. Jour. Pshaw, no, it is not that. That which we both of us say, the language we speak this instant?

Mme. Jour. Well?

M. Jour. How is it called?

Mme. Jour. It's called just what you please to call it.

M. Jour. It's prose, you ignorant creature.

Mme. Jour. Prose?

M. Jour. Yes, prose. Whatever is prose is not verse, and whatever is not verse is prose. Now, see what it is to study.

Covielle. Sir, I don't know whether I have the honour to be known to you.

M. Jour. No, sir.

Cov. I saw you when you were not above thus tall.

M. Jour. Me?

Cov. Yes. You were one of the prettiest children in the world, and all the ladies used to take you in their arms to kiss you.

M. Jour. To kiss me?

Cov. Yes; I was an intimate friend of the late nobleman, your father.

M. Jour. Of the late nobleman, my father!

Cov. Yes; he was a great nobleman.

M. Jour. What is it you say?

Cov. I say that he was a great nobleman.

M. Jour. My father?

Cov. Yes.

M. Jour. Did you know him very well?

Cov. Certainly.

M. Jour. And did you know him for a nobleman?

Cov. Of course.

M. Jour. I don't know then what people mean.

Cov. How?

M. Jour. There is a stupid sort of people who would face me down that he was a tradesman.

Cov. He a tradesman! It's mere scandal, he never was a tradesman. All that he did was that he was very obliging, very ready, and as he was a great connoisseur in stuffs, he used to pick them up everywhere, have them carried to his house, and gave them to his friends for money.

M. Jour. I'm very glad of your acquaintance, that you may bear witness that my father was a gentleman.

Cov. I'll maintain it in the face of all the world.

Molière.

THE MISER.

(L'AVARE.)

[*The Miser's directions to his servants.*]

Harpagon. Here, come hither all of you, that I may distribute to you the orders of the day, and regulate your several employments. A little nearer, Dame Claude. To begin with you. Good, you are ready armed there. The care of cleaning out everything I commit to you; and above all, take care not to rub the furniture too hard, for fear of wearing it out. Furthermore, I assign to you the government of the bottles during supper; and if any one is missing, or anything is broken, I shall look to you for it, and stop it out of your wages.

Jacques (aside). A politic punishment.

Harp. (*to Dame Claude*). You may go. You, Brindavoine, and you, Merluche, I give you the charge of rinsing the glasses, and serving the wine; but only when one is thirsty, and not in the manner of some of your impertinent footmen, who must provoke people, and put it in their heads to drink,

when they don't dream on it. Wait till they call for it again and again, and remember always to mix a great deal of water with it.

Jacq. (aside). Yes, for all—wine gets into the head.

La Merluche. Shall we throw off our canvas aprons, sir?

Harp. Yes, when you see the guests coming; and take special care not to spoil your clothes.

Brindavoine. You know very well, sir, that one of the fore-flaps of my doublet is covered with a great blotch of lamp-oil.

La Mer. And I, sir, have my breeches so slit behind that, saving your presence, one may see my——

Harp. Peace, turn that side dexterously towards the wall, and always show your fore-part to the world. And you, always hold your hat in this fashion, when you serve at table. (*Harpagon holds his hat before his doublet to show Brindavoine how to hide the blotch of oil.*)

[*The Miser discovers the loss of his money-box.*]

Harp. (*from the garden, crying thieves*). Thieves, thieves, murder, assassination. Justice, just Heaven! I'm undone, I'm murdered, they've cut my throat, they've stolen my money. Who can this be? What's become of him? Where is he? Where does he hide himself? What shall I do to find him? Whither run? Whither not run? Isn't he there? Isn't he here? Who's there? Stand! Restore me my money, rascal—(*to himself, laying hold of his own arm*). Ah! 'tis myself. My mind's disturbed; and I don't know where I am, who I am, or what I do. Alas! my poor money, my poor money, my dear friend, they've bereaved me of thee; and since thou art removed, I've lost my support, my consolation, my joy; everything's at an end with me, and I've no more to do in the world. Without thee 'tis impossible for me to live. 'Tis over with me, I can do no more. I die. I'm dead. I'm buried. Is there nobody will raise me to life again, by restoring my beloved money, or informing me who has taken it? Eh! what say you? Alas! 'tis nobody. Whoever they be that have given the blow, they must have picked their opportunity with a great deal of care; they pitched upon the exact time when I was in discourse with my villain of a son. Let's out. I'll go demand justice, and order my whole family to be put to the torture—my maids, my footmen, my son, my daughter, and myself too. What a crowd's here got together! I can cast my eyes on nobody who gives me not suspicion, everything seems my thief. Eh! what are they talking of there? For heaven's sake, if you know tidings of my thief, I beseech you tell me. Is he not hid there amongst you? They all stare at me, and fall a-laughing. You'll see that they are certainly concerned in this robbery committed upon me. Here, quick, commissaries, archers, provosts, judges, racks, gibbets, and executioners. I'll hang all the

world; and if I don't find my money, I'll hang myself afterwards.

[*The Miser is informed that his new steward, Valère, has stolen the money-box, and Valère, thinking Harpagon has discovered the disguise assumed to win the affection of his daughter, confesses his guilt.*]

Harp. But I mean to recover my treasure, and you to confess whither you've carried it?¹

Val. I? I've not carried her off; she's still at home.

Harp. (aside). Oh, my dear casket? (*Aloud.*) Is't not gone out of my house?

Val. No, sir.

Harp. Eh! Tell me a little; hast thou not been dabbling?

Val. I dabbling? Ah! you wrong us both; the flame with which I burn is too pure, too full of respect to admit of that.

Harp. (aside). Burn for my casket!

Val. I would much rather have died than have revealed the least offensive thought; there was too much wisdom, too much virtue for that.

Harp. My casket too virtuous!

Val. All my desires were limited to the pleasure of sight; and nothing criminal has profaned the passion those beautiful eyes inspired.

Harp. The beautiful eyes of my casket!²

Molière.

¹ In French, the daughter and the money-box are both spoken of as *she*: so while Valère is speaking of the daughter, Harpagon thinks he refers to the money-box or casket (*cassette*).

² The well-known phrase, "Les beaux yeux de ma cassette!"

TARTUFFE.

[*Tartuffe is an hypocrite who has obtained the ascendancy in the house of his dupe, and repays him for it by every species of villainy. The lady's-maid has found him out, and would fain enlighten her master, but to no purpose.*]

Orgon. Well, Dorina, has everything been going on as it should do these two days? How do they all do? And what have they been about?

Dorina. The mistress was ill the day before yesterday with a fever. She had a headache quite dreadful to think of.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Tartuffe! Oh, he is wonderfully well; fat and hearty; with a fresh complexion, and a mouth as red as a rose.

Org. (*turning about, with an air of fondness*). Poor soul!¹

Dor. In the evening my mistress was taken ill, and couldn't touch a bit at supper, her head was so bad.

¹ The well-known expression, "Le pauvre homme!"

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Oh, seeing she couldn't eat, he ate by himself; and very devoutly swallowed two partridges, with a good half of a hashed leg of mutton.

Org. Poor soul!

Dor. My mistress didn't shut her eyes all night. The fever hindered her from getting a wink of sleep; so that we were obliged to watch by her till morning.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Tartuffe, happy gentleman, with a comfortable yawn, goes right from table to bed, where he plunges into his warm nest, and sleeps soundly till morning.

Org. Poor soul!

Dor. At last we prevailed upon madame to be bled, which gave her great relief.

Org. And Tartuffe?

Dor. Monsieur Tartuffe was very much relieved also. He found himself charming; and, to repair the loss of blood which madame had sustained, took four good swigs of wine with his breakfast.

Org. Poor soul!

Dor. In short, they are both very well now; so I'll go and tell my mistress you are coming, and how happy you are to hear she is recovered.

Molière.

THE AMENITIES OF AUTHORS.

Trissotin (introducing Vadius). This is the man that is dying to see you. When I introduce him to you, I do not fear being blamed for having admitted a profane person to you, Madam; he may hold his place amongst the *Beaux Esprits*.

Philaminte. The hand that introduces him is sufficient guarantee of his worth.

Tris. He has a perfect knowledge of the ancient authors, and understands Greek, Madam, as well as any man in France.

Phil. (to Belise). Greek, oh, heavens! Greek. He understands Greek, sister.

Belise (to Armande). Ah, niece, Greek.

Armande. Greek! How delightful!

Phil. What, does the gentleman understand Greek? Ah! pray let me embrace you, sir, for Greek's sake.

(Vadius embraces both Belise and Armande.)

Henriette (to Vadius, who would embrace her likewise). Excuse me, sir, I do not understand Greek.

(They sit down.)

Phil. I have a wonderful respect for Greek books.

Vad. I fear my intrusion, caused by the great desire I had to see you, Madam, has disturbed some learned discourse.

Phil. Sir, with your Greek you can spoil nothing——

Tris. He likewise does wonders in verse as well as prose, and could, if he would, show you something.

Vad. The fault of authors is to bore people by talking about their own works; to be at the palace, in courts, streets, or at table, indefatigable readers of their own tiresome verses. For my part, I see nothing more ridiculous than an author who goes everywhere mumping for praise,

who, seizing the ears of the first-comers, makes them martyrs to his lucubrations. They never saw me such a conceited fool; and in this I am of the opinion of a certain Greek, who, by an express dogma, forbids all his wise men the unbecoming forwardness of reading their own works.

Tris. (to Vadius). Have you seen a little sonnet upon the Princess Urania's fever?

Vad. Yes, it was read to me yesterday.

Tris. Do you know the author?

Vad. No; but I know very well that, not to flatter him, his sonnet's worth nothing.

Tris. A great many people, however, think it admirable.

Vad. That doesn't hinder its being miserable; and if you had seen it you would be of my opinion.

Tris. I know I should not be so at all; and that few are capable of such a sonnet.

Vad. Heaven preserve us from making such!

Tris. I maintain that a better can't be made, and I ought to know, since I am the author.

Vad. You?

Tris. I.

Vad. I can't tell then how the thing was.

Tris. It was, that I was unfortunate enough not to be able to please you.

Vad. I could not have been paying attention when I heard it, or else the reader spoiled the sonnet. But let's leave this subject and see my ballad.

Tris. A ballad, in my opinion, is an insipid thing; it's no longer in fashion, it smells of antiquity.

Vad. A ballad, however, pleases a great many people.

Tris. That don't hinder its displeasing me.

Vad. It may be none the worse for that.

Tris. It has a wonderful charm for pedants.

Vad. And yet it does not please you.

Tris. You gratuitously assign your own faults to others.

(*They all rise.*)

Vad. You very impertinently cast yours upon me.

Tris. Go, schoolboy, paper-blotter.

Vad. Go, pitiful rhymers, shame to thy profession!

Tris. Go, verse-stealer, impudent plagiary.

Vad. Go, pedant——

Phil. Oh, gentlemen, what do you mean?

Tris. (*to Vadius*). Go, go, restore the shameful thefts you have made from the Greeks and Latins.

Vad. Go, go, and do penance on Parnassus for having lamed Horace in your verses.

Tris. Remember your book, and the little stir it made.

Vad. Remember your publisher, reduced to the work-house.

Tris. My reputation is established; in vain you endeavour to mangle it.

Vad. My pen shall teach you what sort of a man I am.

Tris. And mine shall make you know your master.

Vad. I defy you in verse, prose, Greek, and Latin.

Molière.

AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF NEWS.

(TO M. DE COULANGES.)

PARIS, *Monday, December 15, 1670.*

I AM now going to tell you of an event which is the most surprising, the most astonishing, the most marvellous, the most miraculous, the most elating, the most confounding, the most singular, the most incredible, the most unexpected, the greatest and the least, the most rare and the most common, the most public and yet the most private until this

day, the most brilliant and most deserving of envy—in short, an event of which only one example can be found in ages past, and that one is not exact—an event which we can scarcely believe at Paris—how then should it be credited at Lyons? an event which has made everybody exclaim, how wonderful! an event which delights some and grieves others—which is to take place on Sunday, when those who see it will doubt the testimony of their eyes—an event which is to happen on Sunday, and perhaps will not be concluded on Monday. I cannot resolve to tell you—guess;—I give you one guess, two, three. Are you at your wits' ends? Well, then, if I must tell you—Monsieur de Lauzun is to be married next Sunday to—guess; I think I hear Madame de Coulanges say, mighty difficult, truly—why, it is to Madame de la Vallière; no, madam, it is not. Well, then, it is to Mademoiselle de Retz—by no means; how provincial you are! Oh! really we are foolish, say you—it is to Mademoiselle de Colbert. Not at all; you are again mistaken;—it certainly then is to Mademoiselle de Croqui. Wrong, quite wrong. I find I must tell you. He will be married on Sunday at the Louvre, with the king's permission, to Mademoiselle—come, guess the name—to Mademoiselle, the great Mademoiselle, the daughter of the late Duke of Orleans. Mademoiselle, first cousin to the king, granddaughter of Henry IV., heiress to so many titles, to such an immense fortune, destined to fill a throne, and the only match in France worthy of the king's brother. Here is a subject for meditation! If you make a hundred exclamations, if you think we tell lies, and mean to deceive you—if you say that we are laughing at you, and call it a silly jest; if, in short, you abuse us heartily, we shall think you perfectly right. We have said quite as much ourselves.

Madame de Sévigné (1626–1696).

THE FOX, THE WOLF, AND THE HORSE

A FOX, though
young, by no
means raw,¹

Had seen a horse—the
first he ever saw :

Ho ! neighbour wolf,
he to one quite green,
A creature in our meadow
I have seen,—

Sleek, grand ! I seem to see him yet,—

The finest beast I ever met.

Is he a stouter one than we ?

The wolf demanded eagerly.

Some picture of him let me see.

If I could paint, said fox, I should delight

T' anticipate your pleasure at the sight ;

But come, who knows ? perhaps it is a prey

By fortune offered in our way.

They went. The horse, turn'd loose to graze,

Not liking much their looks or ways,

Was just about to gallop off.

Sir, said the fox, your humble servants, we

Make bold to ask you what your name may be.

The horse, an animal with brains enough,

¹ La Fontaine read this fable at his election to the Academy, and so charmingly that he was asked to read it again.

Replied, Sirs, you yourselves may read my name ;
 My shoer round my heel hath writ the same.
 The fox excused himself for want of knowledge :
 Me, sir, my parents did not educate,—
 So poor a hole was their entire estate.
 My friend, the wolf, however, taught at college
 Could read it were it even Greek.
 The wolf, to flattery weak,
 Approach'd, to verify the boast ;
 For which four teeth he lost.
 The high-raised hoof came down with such a blow
 As laid him bleeding on the ground full low.
 My brother, said the fox, this shows how just
 What once was taught me by a fox of wit,—
 Which on thy jaws this animal hath writ,—
 “ All unknown things the wise mistrust.”

La Fontaine (1621–1695).

THE ANIMALS SICK OF THE PLAGUE.

THE sorest ill that Heaven hath
 Sent on this lower world in wrath,—
 The plague (to call it by its name),
 One single day of which
 Would Pluto's ferryman enrich,—
 Waged war on beasts, both wild and tame.
 They died not all, but all were sick :
 No hunting now, by force or trick,
 To save what might so soon expire.
 No food excited their desire ;
 Nor wolf nor fox now watched to slay
 The innocent and tender prey.
 The turtles fled ;

So love and therefore joy were dead.
The lion council held, and said :
My friends, I do believe
This awful scourge, for which we grieve,
Is for our sins a punishment
Most righteously by Heaven sent.
Let us our guiltiest beast resign,
A sacrifice to wrath divine.
Perhaps this offering, truly small,
May gain the life and health of all.
By history we find it noted
That lives have been just so devoted.
Then let us all turn eyes within,
And ferret out the hidden sin.
Himself let no one spare nor flatter,
But make clean conscience in the matter.
For me, my appetite has played the glutton
Too much and often upon mutton.
What harm had e'er my victims done ?
I answer, truly, none.
Perhaps, sometimes, by hunger press'd,
I've ate the shepherd with the rest.
I yield myself if need there be;
And yet, I think, in equity,
Each should confess his sins with me;
For laws of right and justice cry,
The guiltiest alone should die.
Sire, said the fox, your majesty
Is humbler than a king should be,
And over-squeamish in the case.
What ! eating stupid sheep a crime ?
No, never, sire, at any time.
It rather was an act of grace,
A mark of honour to their race.
And as to shepherds, one may swear

The fate your majesty describes,
Is recompense less full than fair
For such usurpers o'er our tribes.

Thus Renard glibly spoke,
And loud applause from flatterers broke.
Of neither tiger, boar, nor bear,
Did any keen inquirer dare
To ask for crimes of high degree;
The fighters, biters, scratchers, all
From every mortal sin were free;
The very dogs, both great and small,
Were saints, as far as dogs could be.

The ass, confessing in his turn,
Thus spoke in tones of deep concern :—
I happened through a mead to pass;
The monks, its owners, were at mass;
Keen hunger, leisure, tender grass,
And add to these the devil too,
All tempted me the deed to do.
I browsed the bigness of my tongue;
Since truth must out, I own it wrong.

On this, a hue and cry arose,
As if the beasts were all his foes :
A wolf, haranguing lawyer-wise,
Denounced the ass for sacrifice—
The bald-pate, scabby, ragged lout,
By whom the plague had come, no doubt.
His fault was judged a hanging crime.

What ! eat another's grass ? O shame !
The noose of rope and death sublime,

For that offence, were all too tame !
And soon poor Grizzle felt the same.

Thus human courts acquit the strong,
And doom the weak, as therefore wrong.

La Fontaine.

THE COCK AND THE FOX.

UPON a tree there mounted guard
A veteran cock, adroit and cunning,
When to the roots a fox up running,
Spoke thus in tones of kind regard :
Our quarrel, brother, 's at an end ;
Henceforth I hope to live your friend ;
For peace now reigns
Throughout the animal domains.
I bear the news:—come down, I pray,
And give me the embrace fraternal ;
And please, my brother, don't delay.
So much the tidings do concern all,
That I must spread them far to-day.
Now you and yours can take your walks
Without a fear or thought of hawks.
And should you clash with them or others,
In us you'll find the best of brothers ;—
For which you may, this joyful night,
Your merry bonfires light.
But, first, let's seal the bliss
With one fraternal kiss.
Good friend, the cock replied, upon my word,
A better thing I never heard ;
And doubly I rejoice
To hear it from your voice ;

And, really, there must be something in it,
For yonder come two greyhounds, which I flatter
Myself are couriers on this very matter.

They come so fast, they'll be here in a minute.
I'll down, and all of us will seal the blessing
With general kissing and caressing.

Adieu, said fox ; my errand's pressing ;

I'll hurry on my way,

And we'll rejoice some other day.

So off the fellow scamper'd, quick and light,
To gain the fox-holes of a neighbouring height,
Less happy in his stratagem than flight.

The cock laugh'd sweetly in his sleeve ;—

'Tis doubly sweet deceiver to deceive.

La Fontaine.

THE TWO GOATS.

SINCE goats have browsed, by freedom fired,
To follow fortune they've aspired.

To pasturage they're wont to roam
Where men are least disposed to come.
If any pathless place there be,

Or cliff, or pendent precipice,
'Tis there they cut their capers free :
There's nought can stop these dames, I wis.

Two goats, thus self-emancipated,—
The white that on their feet they wore
Look'd back to noble blood of yore,—

Once quit the lowly meadows, sated,
And sought the hills, as it would seem :

In search of luck, by luck they met
Each other at a mountain stream.

As bridge a narrow plank was set,

On which, if truth must be confest,
Two weasels scarce could go abreast.

"IF ANY PATHLESS PLACE THERE BE,
OR CLIFF, OR PENDENT PRECIPICE."

And then the torrent, foaming white,
As down it tumbled from the height,
Might well those Amazons affright.

But maugre such a fearful rapid,
 Both took the bridge, the goats intrepid !
 I seem to see our Louis Grand
 And Philip IV. advance
 To the Isle of Conference,
 That lies 'twixt Spain and France,
 Each sturdy for his glorious land.
 Thus each of our adventurers goes,
 Till foot to foot, and nose to nose,
 Somewhere about the midst they meet,
 And neither will an inch retreat.
 For why? they both enjoy'd the glory
 Of ancestors in ancient story.

The one, a goat of peerless rank,
 Which, browsing on Sicilian bank,
 The Cyclop gave to Galatæa ;
 The other famous Amalthæa,
 The goat that suckled Jupiter,
 As some historians aver.
 For want of giving back, in troth,
 A common fall involved them both—
 A common accident, no doubt,
 On Fortune's changeful route.

La Fontaine.

THE MULE BOASTING OF HIS GENEALOGY.

A PRELATE'S mule of noble birth was proud,
 And talked incessantly and loud,
 Of nothing but his dam, the mare,
 Whose mighty deeds by him recounted were,—
 'This had she done, and had been present there,—
 By which her son made out his claim
 To notice on the scroll of Fame.

Too proud, when young, to bear a doctor's pill;
When old, he had to turn a mill.
As there they used his limbs to bind
His sire, the ass, was brought to mind.
Misfortune, were its only use
The claims of folly to reduce,
And bring men down to sober reason,
Would be a blessing in its season.

La Fontaine.

THE EPITAPH OF LA FONTAINE.

[WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.]

JOHN went as he came—ate his farm with its fruits,
Held treasure to be but the cause of disputes;
And, as to his time, be it frankly confest,
Divided it daily as suited him best,—
Gave a part to his sleep, and to nothing the rest.

La Fontaine.

AN ABSENT-MINDED MAN.

MENALCAS goes downstairs, opens the street door,
and closes it behind him. He then discovers that he has his night-cap on, and, examining himself more carefully, finds that he is only half-shaved, that his sword is fastened on the wrong side, that his stockings are ungartered, and that his shirt is outside his breeches. Like the lady who asked for her mask when it was all the while on her face, he asks for his gloves when he has them all the time in his hand. He enters the royal drawing-room, and passing under a chandelier, his wig catches in it and remains suspended. The courtiers gaze at it and laugh; Menalcas

gazes too, laughing louder than all, and looks round the assembly to discover the man who is minus a wig. If he takes a walk, after going a short distance he thinks he has lost his way, becomes uneasy, and asks the passers-by where he is; they tell him the name of his own street. He immediately enters his own house, but, thinking himself mistaken, quickly leaves it. Coming away from the palace, he finds a coach at the grand entrance, and, taking it for



"PASSING UNDER A CHANDELIER, HIS WIG CATCHES IN IT."

his own, he gets in. The coachman drives on, thinking he is carrying his master home. Menalcas alights, walks across the courtyard, through the ante-chamber, the room, the closet;—all is familiar to him, nothing strikes him as new; he sits down, takes his ease, he is at home. The master returns, Menalcas rises to receive him, treats him most politely, begs him to sit down, thinking he is doing the

honours of his own house. He talks, is silent, talks again. The master of the house is annoyed and astonished. Menalcas is equally astonished, but keeps his thoughts to himself. The man is a bore, an idler, who will, he hopes, soon take his departure; meanwhile he must possess his soul in patience. It is almost night before he is undeceived. Another time he calls on a lady, but thinking it is she who is calling on him, seats himself in her favourite arm-chair, and never dreams of giving it up. It then occurs to him that the lady's visit is rather long, and every moment he expects her to get up and go. But she stays on, and as he is hungry, and it is getting late, he invites her to stop to supper. She laughs so loudly that he is awakened from his dream. He gets married in the morning, and has forgotten all about it by the evening. A few years afterwards he loses his wife; she dies in his arms, he is present at the funeral, and the next day when dinner is announced, he asks if his wife is ready, and if she has been told. Finding himself by chance in the company of a young widow, he speaks to her of her deceased husband, asking her how he came to die. The question renews the lady's grief. She weeps, sobs, and recounts all the details of her husband's illness, from the beginning of the fever till the last agony. "Madam," asks Menalcas, who has apparently listened most attentively, "was that all that was the matter?" He was once returning from the country. His servants devised a plan of robbing him. They got down from the coach, held a torch in his face, demanded his purse, and he delivered it to them. Arrived home, he relates the adventure to his friends, and when they question him about the details, says, "Ask my servants; they were there."

La Bruyère (1645-1696).

A GAMBLER'S DEBTS.¹

"HERE, SIR, IS A SMALL MEMORANDUM OF MY MASTER'S DEBTS."

[*Géronte, Valère's father, has promised to pay his son's debts.
Valère sends his servant Hector with a list of them.*]

Hector (carrying a bundle of papers). Here, sir, is a small memorandum of my master's debts. As you perceive, he keeps his word, and trusts that you will keep yours.

¹ The original is in verse.

Géronte. There, there, hurry up with what you've to tell me.

Hec. A couple of words will be enough. What a good father you are! You come to our assistance just in the nick of time. A day later and we should have been ruined!

Gér. I quite believe it.

Hec. It will be useless to discuss the details. I assure you, on the faith of an honest man, that I can take off nothing. I've made the fairest possible reckoning, and promise you that I've omitted nothing.

Gér. Get on, I say.

Hec. A man must be careful what he is about. (*Reading.*) "Accurate and brief statement of our pressing debts, which Mathurin Géronte has promised to pay for his son."

Gér. Whether I pay them or not is no business of yours. Proceed.

Hec. Just what I'm about to do, sir. "*Item*—Owed to Richard five hundred pounds, ten sous—wages, advances, disbursements, etc., for five years."

Gér. Who may this Richard be?

Hec. Myself, very much at your service. As the name is not exactly suited to a gambler's valet, my master christened me Hector—the knave of diamonds.

Gér. A fine name, indeed! He ought to call Angélique, Pallas—the queen of spades.

Hec. "Secondly, he owes to one Jeremiah Aaron, usurer by profession, Jew by religion——"

Gér. Ha! What's that? Let us, if you please, understand one another. I've not the slightest intention of paying debts of usury.

Hec. Well, so be it. "Further, he owes to a number of individuals or persons, whose names, ranks, and occupations are stated in detail in the writs of which I hold copies, the sum of ten thousand and one pounds, one

obole, for having for one whole year, without intermission, on his mere word, dressed, driven, wigged, booted, gloved, fed, shaved, quenched the thirst of, carried——”

Gér. (*knocking the papers out of Hector's hand*). Quenched the thirst of, carried! The deuce take you and your cursed list drawn up in such a fashion.

Hec. (*having picked up the papers*). If you don't believe me, I'll send the persons themselves to you to-morrow.

Gér. A fine rout!

Hec. “Further, to Madame So-and-so, for a certain house of hers that we occupy, situated near the ramparts, two hundred and fifty crowns, money due for five quarters' rent.”

Gér. What house is that?

Hec. A place of rest, to which we retire from the bustle of the city, and where my master orders several hogsheads of wine to be sent in without paying for it, so that he may drown his grief.

Gér. And you mean to say, rascal——

Hec. (*changing his tone*). No bad language, sir, if you please. Now I will give you a statement of our assets, and you will see that if the amounts are faithfully paid we shall have very nearly enough.

Gér. Proceed.

Hec. “Firstly, Isaac de la Serre——” You know him?

Gér. Of course I know him, and so does everybody. He is the famous merchant and banker.

Hec. You see we don't accept doubtful bills. This one smells like the sweetest perfume. Well, then, this De la Serre, so well known to you and everybody, owes us nothing.

Gér. What?

Hec. But one of his relations, who died lately, owes us ten thousand francs.

Gér. Well, that's a strange sort of bill.

Hec. Oh! if he wasn't dead it would be as good as ready

money. "Further, the Chevalier Fijac owes my master the mortgaged rights of a game of backgammon."

Gér. What do you mean?

Hec. The match is for two hundred pistoles. But it's all a cheat, because he makes twenty blunders every game, and thus, you see, only one throw is needed.

Gér. (boxing his ears). There, scoundrel, that's for daring to present me with such a list. Take that money to your master.

Hec. He won't accept that money.

Regnard (1655-1709).

GIL BLAS BECOMES A CELEBRATED PHYSICIAN.

I ACCEPTED the doctor's proposal, in hopes of making myself illustrious in physic under the auspices of such a learned master; and he carried me home with him on the instant, in order to initiate me in the employment for which I was designed. This employment consisted in writing the names and places of abode of the patients who sent for him while he was abroad. . . . I was invested with the charge of this book, which might have been with great justice styled a register of the dead; for almost all the people whose names it contained gave up the ghost. I inserted in it (to use the expression) the names of those people who were to set out for the other world, as the clerk of a stage-coach office registers those who take places. The pen was seldom out of my hand, because there was not at that time a physician in Valladolid of more credit than Doctor Sangrado, who had acquired great reputation with the public by a pomp of words, a solemn air, and some lucky cures which had done him more honour than he deserved.

"Hark'ee, my child," said Sangrado one day, ". . . I am well pleased with thy behaviour. I have a regard for thee, and without further delay will make thy fortune. I will immediately disclose to thee the whole extent of that

"I HAVE A REGARD FOR THEE, AND WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY WILL
MAKE THY FORTUNE."

salutary art which I have professed so many years. Other physicians make this consist in the knowledge of a thousand difficult sciences; but I intend to go a shorter way to work, and spare thee the trouble of studying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and physic: know, my friend, all that is

required is to bleed thy patients and make them drink warm water. This is the secret of curing all the distempers incident to man. Yes! that wonderful secret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, hath not been able to hide from my researches, is contained in these two points of plentiful bleeding and frequent draughts of water. I have nothing more to impart; thou knowest physic to the very bottom, and, reaping the fruit of my long experience, art become in a twinkling as skilful as I am. . . . Thou art learned, Gil Blas, before thou turnest physician, whereas others prescribe a long time, generally all their lives, without ever becoming learned."

Lesage (1648-1747).

*GIL BLAS SELLS HIS MULE,
AND ENTERTAINS A GUEST AT SUPPER.*

HE (the landlord) concluded at length, however, telling me that if I had a mind to sell my mule, he was acquainted with a very honest jockey who would buy her. I assured him he would oblige me in sending for him, upon which he went in quest of him immediately, with great eagerness. It was not long before he returned with his man, whom he introduced to me as a person of exceeding honesty, and we went into the yard altogether, where the mule was produced, and passed and repassed before the jockey, who examined her from head to foot, and did not fail to speak very disadvantageously of her. I own there was not much to be said in her praise; but, however, had it been the Pope's mule, he would have found some defects in her. He assured me that she had all the faults a mule could have; and, to convince me of his veracity, appealed to the landlord, who doubtless had his reasons for supporting his

friend's assertions. "Well," said this dealer, with an air of indifference, "how much money do you expect for this wretched animal?" After the eulogium he had bestowed on her, and the attestation of Signior Corcuélo, whom I believed to be a man of honesty and understanding, I would have given my mule for nothing; and therefore told him I

"HE ASSURED ME SHE HAD ALL THE FAULTS A MULE COULD HAVE."

would rely on his integrity, bidding him appraise the beast in his own conscience, and I would stand to the valuation. Upon this he assumed the man of honour, and replied that in engaging his conscience I took him on the weak side: in good sooth that did not seem to be his strong side, for instead of valuing her at ten or twelve pistoles, as my uncle

had done, he fixed the price at three ducats, which I accepted with as much joy as if I had made an excellent bargain.

When I arrived at the inn I called for supper, and, it

"THE CAVALIER ADVANCED TOWARDS ME WITH AN EAGER AIR."

being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs, and while they got ready I made up to my landlady, whom I had not seen before. She appeared handsome enough, and withal so sprightly and gay that I should have concluded (even if her husband had not told me so) that her house

was pretty well frequented. When the omelet I had bespoke was ready, I sat down to table by myself, and had not yet swallowed the first morsel when the landlord came in, followed by the man who had stopped him in the street. This cavalier, who wore a long sword, and seemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, saying, "Mr. Student, I am informed that you are that Signior Gil Blas, of Santillane, who is the link of philosophy and ornament of Oviedo! Is it possible that you are that mirror of learning, that sublime genius, whose reputation is so great in this country? You know not," continued he, addressing himself to the innkeeper and his wife, "you know not what you possess! You have a treasure in your house! Behold, in this young gentleman, the eighth wonder of the world!" Then turning to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, "Forgive," cried he, "my transports! I cannot contain the joy that your presence creates!"

I could not answer for some time, because he locked me so close in his arms that I was almost suffocated for want of breath; and it was not till I had disengaged my head from his embrace that I replied, "Signior Cavalier, I did not think my name was known at Pennaflor." "How! known!" resumed he in his former strain. "We keep a register of all the celebrated names within twenty leagues of us. You in particular are looked upon as a prodigy; and I don't at all doubt that Spain will one day be proud of you, as Greece was of her seven sages." These words were followed by a fresh hug, which I was forced to endure, though at the risk of strangulation. With the little experience I had, I ought not to have been the dupe of his professions and hyperbolical compliments. I ought to have known, by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of those parasites which abound in every town, and who, when a stranger arrives, introduce themselves

to him, in order to fill their bellies at his expense; but my youth and vanity made me judge quite otherwise: my admirer appeared to me so much of a gentleman that I invited him to take a share of my supper. "Ah! with all my soul," cried he; "I am too much obliged to my kind stars for having thrown me in the way of the illustrious Gil Blas not to enjoy my good fortune as long as I can! I have no great appetite," pursued he; "but I will sit down to bear you company, and eat a mouthful, purely out of complaisance."

So saying, my panegyrist took his place right over against me, and, a cover being laid for him, attacked the omelet as voraciously as if he had fasted three whole days: by his complaisant beginning I foresaw that our dish would not last long, and therefore ordered a second; which they dressed with such despatch that it was served just as we—or rather he—had made an end of the first. He proceeded on this with the same vigour, and found means, without losing one stroke of his teeth, to overwhelm me with praise during the whole repast, which made me very well pleased with my sweet self. He drank in proportion to his eating: sometimes to my health, sometimes to that of my father and mother, whose happiness in having such a son as me he could not enough admire. In the meantime he plied me with wine, and insisted upon my doing him justice, while I toasted health for health; a circumstance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into such good humour, that, seeing our second omelet half devoured, I asked the landlord if he had no fish in the house. Signior Corcuélo, who, in all likelihood, had a fellow-feeling with the parasite, replied, "I have a delicate trout; but those who eat it must pay for the sauce. 'Tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I doubt." "What do you call too dainty?" said the sycophant, raising his voice. "You're a wiseacre,

indeed ! Know that there is nothing in this house too good for Signior Gil Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be entertained like a prince."

I was pleased at his laying hold of the landlord's last words, in which he prevented me, who, finding myself offended, said, with an air of disdain, "Produce this trout of yours, gaffer Corcuélo, and give yourself no trouble about the consequence." This was what the innkeeper wanted: he got it ready, and served it up in a trice. At sight of this new dish I could perceive the parasite's eyes sparkle with joy; and he renewed that complaisance—I mean for the fish—which he had already shown for the eggs. At last, however, he was obliged to give up, for fear of accident, being crammed to the very throat. Having therefore eaten and drank his bellyful, he thought proper to conclude the farce by rising from table and accosting me in these words, "Signior Gil Blas, I am too well satisfied with your good cheer to leave you without offering an important advice, which you seem to have great occasion for. Henceforth beware of praise, and be upon your guard against everybody you do not know. You may meet with other people inclined to divert themselves with your credulity, and perhaps to push things still further; but don't be duped again, nor believe yourself, though they should swear it, the eighth wonder of the world." So saying, he laughed in my face and stalked away.

Lesage.

*GIL BLAS BECOMES SECRETARY TO THE
ARCHBISHOP OF GRENADA.*

I FOUND in the apartments of the archbishop a crowd of ecclesiastics and gentlemen of the sword, the greatest part whereof were the officers of his Grace—his almoners, his gentlemen, his ushers, and *valets de*

chambre. The laity were, almost all, so superbly dressed, that one would have taken them for noblemen rather than domestics, by their haughty looks and affectation of being men of consequence. While I beheld them, I could not help laughing and ridiculing them within myself. "Egad," said I, "these people are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude without feeling it; for, in short, if they felt it, I imagine that their behaviour would be less assuming." Addressing myself to a grave, jolly personage that stood at the door of the archbishop's closet in order to open and shut it when there was occasion, I asked civilly if I could not speak with his Grace. "Wait," said he dryly, "till his Grace comes out to go to Mass, and he will give you a moment's audience in passing." I armed myself with patience, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with some of the officers, but they began to examine me from head to foot, without deigning to speak one syllable; and then they looked at one another, smiling with disdain at the liberty which I had taken to mingle in their discourse. I was, I own, quite disconcerted at seeing myself treated in this manner by valets, and had scarce recollected myself from the confusion in which I was when the closet-door opened, and the archbishop appeared.

Immediately a profound silence prevailed among his officers, who, all of a sudden, laid aside their insolent carriage and assumed a respectful look in presence of their master. This prelate was in his sixty-ninth year, pretty much of the make of my uncle, the Canon Gil Perez; that is, plump and short. He was very much bandy-legged into the bargain, and so bald that he had only a small tuft of hair remaining on the back part of his head; for which reason he was obliged to cover his head in a fine woollen cap with long ears. In spite of all that, I observed in him the air of a man of quality; doubtless, because I knew him to be one. We common

people look upon all your great noblemen with a prepossession that often gives them an air of greatness which nature has refused.

The archbishop, immediately advancing towards me, with a voice full of sweetness asked what I wanted, and I told him that I was the young man of whom Don Fernand de Leyva had spoken to him. He gave me no time to proceed, but cried, "Oh, you are the person then of whom he spoke so handsomely. I retain you in my service. You are a valuable acquisition. You may stay where you are." So saying, he went out, supported by two ushers, after having heard some clergymen, who had something to communicate. Scarce was he out of the room when the same officers who had disdained my conversation now courted it. They surrounded me, and with the utmost complaisance expressed their joy at seeing me become a commensal officer of the palace. Having heard what their master said to me, they had a longing desire to know on what footing I was retained; but I was so malicious as to baulk their curiosity in revenge for their contempt.

His Grace returning in a little time, made me follow him into his closet that he might talk with me in private. I concluded that his design in so doing was to try my understanding, and, accordingly, kept myself on my guard, and was resolved to weigh every word before I should speak it. He first of all examined me on what is called humanity; and I did not answer amiss. He had occasion to see that I was pretty well acquainted with the Greek and Latin authors. He then put me upon logic, where I expected him, and found me quite master of that subject. "Your education," said he to me with some surprise, "has not been neglected; let us now see your handwriting." I thereupon took out of my pocket a sheet, which I had brought for the purpose, and the prelate seemed very well pleased with my perform-

ance. "I am satisfied with your hand," he cried, "and still more with your understanding."

His Grace gave me a homily to transcribe, informing me to copy it with all possible exactness. This I performed minutely, without having forgot either accent, point, or comma; so that the joy he expressed was mingled with surprise. "Good heaven!" cried he in a transport when he had surveyed all the sheets of my copy, "was ever anything seen so correct? You transcribe so well, that you must certainly understand grammar. Tell me ingenuously, my friend, have you found nothing that shocked you in writing it over? Some neglect, perhaps, in the style, or improper term?" "Oh, sir," answered I with an air of modesty, "I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and if I was, I am persuaded that the works of your Grace would escape my censure." The prelate smiled at my reply; and though he said nothing, discovered through all his piety that he was a downright author. . . . One evening he repeated in his closet, when I was present, with great enthusiasm, a homily which he intended to pronounce the next day in the cathedral; and not satisfied with asking my opinion of it in general, obliged me to single out the particular passages which I most admired. I had the good luck to mention those that he himself looked upon to be the best, his own favourite *morceaus*; by which means I passed in his judgment for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauty of a work. . . . "The honour of being reckoned a perfect orator," said the archbishop, "has charmed my imagination. . . . But I would, of all things, avoid the fault of all good authors who write too long, and retire without forfeiting the least tittle of my reputation. Wherefore, my dear Gil Blas," continued the prelate, "one thing that I exact of thy zeal is, whenever thou shalt perceive my pen smack of old age, and my genius flag, don't fail to advertise

me of it. . . . If it should come to my ears that the public says my discourses have no longer their wonted force, and that it is high time for me to repose myself, I frankly declare that thou shalt lose my friendship, as well as the fortune I have promised. Such will be the fruit of your foolish reserve."

We had a hot alarm in the episcopal palace; the archbishop was seized with a fit of the apoplexy; he was, however, succoured immediately, and such salutary medicines administered, that in a few days his health was re-established; but his understanding had received a rude shock, which I plainly perceived in the very next discourse he composed. I did not, however, find the difference between this and the rest so sensible as to make me conclude that the orator began to flag, and waited for another homily to fix my resolution. This, indeed, was quite decisive; sometimes the good old prelate repeated the same thing over and over; sometimes rose too high, or sunk too low. It was a vague discourse, the rhetoric of an old professor, a mere capucinade.¹

I was not the only person who took notice of this. The greatest part of the audience, when he pronounced it, as if they had been also hired to examine it, said softly to one another: "This sermon smells strong of apoplexy."

The only thing that embarrassed me now was how to break the ice. Luckily the orator himself extricated me from that difficulty by asking what people said of him, and if they were satisfied with his last discourse. I answered that his homilies were always admired, but, in my opinion, the last had not succeeded so well as the rest in affecting the audience. "How, friend!" replied he with astonish-

¹ A sarcasm on the sermons of the Capuchins, which are not remarkable for correctness of composition.

ment. "Has it met with any Aristarchus?"¹ "No, sir," said I, "by no means. Such works as yours are not to be criticised; everybody is charmed with them. Nevertheless, since you have laid your injunctions upon me to be free and sincere, I will take the liberty to tell you that your last discourse, in my judgment, has not altogether the energy of your other performances. Are not you of the same opinion?"

My master grew pale at these words, and said with a forced smile, "So then, Mr. Gil Blas, this piece is not to your taste?" "I don't say so, sir," cried I, quite disconcerted. "I think it excellent, although a little inferior to your other works." "I understand you," he replied; "you think I flag, don't you? Come, be plain. You believe it is time for me to think of retiring." "I should not have been so bold," said I, "as to speak so freely if your Grace had not commanded me. I do no more, therefore, than obey you; and I most humbly beg that you will not be offended at my freedom." "God forbid," cried he, with precipitation, "God forbid that I should find fault with it. In so doing I should be very unjust. I don't at all take it ill that you speak your sentiment; it is your sentiment only that I find bad. I have been most egregiously deceived in your narrow understanding."

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavoured to find some mitigation in order to set things to rights again. But how is it possible to appease an incensed author, one especially who had been accustomed to hear himself praised? "Say no more, my child," said he; "you are yet too raw to make proper distinctions. Know that I never composed a better homily than that which you disapprove, for my genius, thank heaven, hath as yet lost nothing of its vigour. Henceforth I will make a better choice of a confidant, and keep one of greater ability than you. Go," added he,

¹ A great critic in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus.

pushing me by the shoulders out of his closet, "go tell my treasurer to give you an hundred ducats, and may heaven bless you with them. Adieu, Mr. Gil Blas! I wish you all manner of prosperity, with a little more taste."

Lesage.

A LOVER'S PROSE.

(FROM "TURCARET.")

The Baroness (a young, coquettish widow). Be quiet, Marine; there's Monsieur Turcaret's lackey.

Marine (the Baroness's waiting-maid, in a whisper). Oh! never mind him; he brings good news. He's carrying something; doubtless another present from his master.

Flamand (M. Turcaret's servant, offering the Baroness a small box). Madame, Monsieur Turcaret entreats you to accept this little present. Good-day, Marine.

Marine. I'm delighted to see you, Flamand. I had much rather you came than that wretch Frontin.

The Baroness (showing Marine the box). Look, Marine; admire the workmanship of this little box. Have you ever seen anything more delicate?

Marine. Open it, open it. I reserve my admiration till I've seen the inside; something tells me the inside will please us more than the outside.

The Baroness (opening it). What do I see? A note of hand! This is very serious.

Marine. For how much, Madame?

The Baroness. For ten thousand crowns.

Marine (aside). Good! this makes up for the diamond.

The Baroness. Stay! there's another note.

Marine. Also payable to bearer?

The Baroness. No, verses addressed to me by Monsieur Turcaret.

Marine. Verses from Monsieur Turcaret?

The Baroness (reading). "To Phyllis. Quatrain." I am Phyllis, and he entreats me in verse to accept his note in prose.

Marine. I'm vastly curious to hear the verses of an author who writes such capital prose.

The Baroness. Listen, then. (*She reads.*)

"Phyllis, dear, this note unfold,
And rest assured that for thee
My heart true love will ever hold,
As sure as two and one make three."

Marine. How delicately thought out!

The Baroness. And nobly expressed. Authors describe themselves in their works. Go, take this box to my room, Marine.

Lesage.

A LADY OF FASHION.

The Marquis. Lovely Baroness, allow me to present to you a most charming woman, the wittiest, most gallant, and amusing person. The good qualities you mutually possess should bring you into the firmest bonds of esteem and affection.

The Baroness (to the Marquis). I'm well disposed towards such a friendship. (*Aside to Lisette, her waiting-maid.*) She's the original of the Chèvalier's portrait.

Mme. Turcaret (to the Baroness). I fear, Madame, you will not long entertain such kindly feelings towards me. A lady belonging to the aristocratic and brilliant circles of the capital, like yourself, will find little pleasure in the society of a mere provincial.

The Baroness. But you don't look a bit provincial, Madame. The manners of our most fashionable ladies are not more charming than yours.

The Marquis. By gad! that they're not! I'm a connoisseur in such matters, Madame; and looking at that face and figure, you must allow that I have the best taste of any lord in France.

Mme. Turcaret. You are too gallant, Marquis. Such flattery might have some truth in the country, where, vanity apart, I do shine. I'm always on the look-out for the new modes. They are sent me directly they appear; and I can boast of being the first in the town of Valogne to wear flounces.

Lisette (aside). The idiot!

The Baroness. It's a fine thing to set the fashion in a town like Valogne.

Mme. Turcaret. Ah! I've introduced some life into it. Thanks to the young men I attract there, I've made it quite a miniature Paris.

The Marquis. What do you say? A miniature Paris! Don't you know that three months of Valogne are absolutely necessary to complete the education of a courtier?

Mme. Turcaret. Oh! I don't live like a country-bred dame. I don't shut myself up in a castle; I'm made for society. I live in the town, and I dare to say that my house is a school of good breeding and gallantry for young people.

Lisette (to Madame Turcaret). It's a kind of university for the whole of Lower Normandy.

Mme. Turcaret. There they gamble, slander their neighbours, read all the clever books written at Cherbourg, Saint-Lô, and Coutances, and they're quite as good as those of Vire and Caen. Sometimes I give elegant entertainments and suppers. Our cooks, it is true, can't make ragouts, but they roast meat to such perfection that one turn of the spit more or less would spoil it.

The Marquis. That's the one essential of good cooking. Long live the roast meat of Valogne!

Mme. Turcaret. And then we give balls. And most enjoyable they are. The arrangements are perfect. No ladies in the world possess in such a high degree the art of masking themselves, and each has her favourite disguise. Guess mine.

Lisette. Cupid, perhaps.

Mme. Turcaret. No, not exactly.

The Baroness. Some goddess probably, one of the Graces?

Mme. Turcaret. Venus, my dear, Venus.

The Marquis (to Madame Turcaret). Venus! Ah, Madame, that must indeed be a splendid disguise!

Lisette (aside). It couldn't possibly be better.

Lesage.

L'AVOCAT PATELIN.¹

[*Patelin, an advocate, has obtained some cloth from M. Guillaume, a draper, for which he promised to pay the next day. He has cleverly evaded keeping his word. He undertakes to defend Agnelet, a shepherd, against his master, in the hope of receiving a large sum of money.*]

Patelin (to Agnelet). You are to appear before the judge?

Agnelet. Just so.

Pat. Then remember this.

Agn. I've an excellent memory.

Pat. To all the questions asked you, whether by the judge, by your master's counsel, or by me, only reply what you hear your beasts say every day. You can speak their language and play the sheep?

Agn. That's not very difficult.

¹ This comedy is based on a fifteenth century farce, one of the earliest ever performed on the French stage.

Bartolin (the village judge, to M. Patelin). Let the parties appear.

Pat. (aside to Agnelet). When you are questioned, answer exactly as I told you.

Bart. (to Patelin). Who is that man?

Pat. A shepherd who was beaten by his master, and who must, in consequence, be trepanned after the hearing of his case.

Bart. We must wait for our opponents, for his attorney, or advocate. But what does M. Guillaume want with us?

Guillaume (to M. Bartolin). I am going to plead my cause myself.

Pat. (aside to Agnelet). Oh! traitor! it's against M. Guillaume.

Agn. Yes; he's my excellent master!

Pat. Let us try to get out of this.

Guil. Ah! who is that man?

Pat. Sir, I never plead except against an advocate.

Guil. I have no need of an advocate. (*Aside.*) He looks something like him.

Pat. In that case I must retire.

Bart. Stay and plead.

Pat. But, sir——

Bart. Stay, I say. I wish at any rate to have an advocate in my audience. If you go, I'll strike you off the register.

Pat. (aside, concealing his face with his handkerchief). We must conceal our identity as best we can.

Bart. M. Guillaume, you are the plaintiff, speak.

Guil. You must know, sir, that this rascal——

Bart. No bad names.

Guil. Very well. This thief——

Bart. Call him by his name, or by that of his profession.

Guil. Well, any way, sir, I tell you that this rascal of a shepherd stole twenty-six of my sheep.

Pat. That is not proved.

PATELIN: "WE MUST CONCEAL OUR IDENTITY AS BEST WE CAN."

Bart. What's the matter with you, advocate?

Pat. A terrible toothache.

Bart. So much the worse. Proceed.

Guil. By Jove, that advocate rather resembles the hero of my six ells of cloth.

Bart. What proof have you of the theft?

Guil. What proof! Why, I sold him yesterday—I trusted him with six ells, six hundred sheep, and I find only eighty in the flock.

Pat. I beg to deny that fact.

Guil. (aside). If I hadn't first seen the other man delirious, I should be sure this was my man.

Bart. Never mind your man, but prove the fact.

Guil. I prove it by my cloth—I mean by my ledger. What has become of the six ells, of the twenty-six sheep missing from my flock?

Pat. There's no doubt that it is himself. *Non est quæstio de persona.* You were informed that the sheep had died of disease. What have you to say to that?

Guil. With all due respect, it's false. He carried off under—he killed them to sell, and yesterday, I, myself—*(Aside.)* Yes, it's he. *(To M. Bartolin.)* I sold him six—six—I took him in the act, at night, of killing a sheep.

Pat. (to M. Bartolin). A pure invention, sir, to excuse himself for the blows he gave the poor shepherd, who, as I told you before, must be trepanned after the trial.

Guil. (to M. Bartolin). By all the gods! your lordship, it's perfectly true, it is himself, yes. He carried off six ells of cloth from my house yesterday, and this morning, instead of paying me the thirty crowns——

Bart. What the devil have six ells of cloth and thirty crowns to do with the matter? The case before us is, I believe, one of stolen sheep.

Guil. Quite true, sir. That is another affair, and we shall come to it later on. But I am not mistaken. Know

then that I hid myself in the sheepfold. (*Aside.*) Yes, it's certainly he. (*To M. Bartolin.*) I hid myself in the sheepfold, and saw that fellow enter. He took a fat sheep, and his fine words were so successful that he carried off six ells——

Bart. Six ells of sheep?

Guil. No, of cloth, curse the fellow!

Bart. Never mind the cloth and the man, but come back to your sheep.¹

Guil. Very well, I come back. The fellow, having drawn his knife out of his pocket—I mean my cloth—no, I'm right, his knife—he—he—he—he—put it like this under his gown, and carried it off home; and this morning, instead of paying me my thirty crowns, he refused me both cloth and money.

Pat. (laughing). Ha! ha! ha!

Bart. To your sheep, I say, to your sheep.

Pat. (laughing). Ha! ha! ha!

Bart. But you're out of your mind, M. Guillaume; you're dreaming.

Pat. You see, sir, he doesn't know what he's saying.

Guil. Indeed, I know perfectly, sir. He stole twenty-six sheep; and this morning, instead of giving me thirty crowns for six ells of chestnut colour cloth, he paid me with blue devils, the nymph Calypso, ta ral la, my gossip when I dance. How the deuce am I to know what he'll offer me next?

Pat. Ha! ha! ha! he's mad, he's mad.

Bart. Undoubtedly. Stop, M. Guillaume! Not all the courts of justice in the kingdom together could make anything of your case. You accuse this shepherd of stealing twenty-six sheep, and you mix up with it six ells of cloth, thirty crowns, blue devils, and countless fooleries besides. Once again, come back to your sheep, or I shall set

¹ *Revenez à vos moutons.*

the shepherd free. But it would be better for me to question him. (*To Agnelet.*) Come here; what is your name?

Agnelet. Baa.

Guil. He lies, his name is Agnelet.

Bart. Agnelet or Baa, it's all the same. (*To Agnelet.*) Tell me, is it true that M. Guillaume trusted you with twenty-six sheep?

Agn. Baa.

Bart. Perhaps the fear of the law upsets you. Listen, and don't be afraid. Did M. Guillaume find you one night killing a sheep?

Agn. Baa.

Bart. What's the meaning of this?

Pat. The blows on his head have unsettled his brain.

Bart. You are greatly to blame, M. Guillaume.

Guil. I! to blame! One man steals my cloth, another my sheep, one pays me in songs, another in baas, and then, curse it, I'm to blame!

Bart. Why certainly. You should never strike a man, and especially on the head.

Guil. Oh! that's all very well. It was dark, and when I strike, I'm not particular where.

Pat. He confesses. Sir, *habemus confitentem reum.*

Guil. Oh! be off with your *confitareum*. You shall pay me for the six ells of cloth, or the devil take you.

Bart. The cloth again! You are flouting justice. Out of the court and the suit, without costs.

Guil. I appeal; and as for you, you rogue, we shall see.
(*Exit.*)

Pat. (*to Agnelet.*) Thank his lordship.

Agn. Baa, baa.

Bart. Poor wretch—there, that will do. Go and get yourself trepanned at once.
(*Exit.*)

Pat. Now that by my skill I've got you out of an affair

which might have ended in the gallows, it's your turn to pay me as handsomely as you promised.

Agn. Baa.

Pat. Yes, you played your part very well. But now, do you understand, I want my money.

Agn. Baa.

Pat. Oh! leave off baaing, do; there's no more need of it. There's no one here but you and me. Are you going to keep your promise, and pay me well?

Agn. Baa.

Pat. You rascal! Am I to be the dupe of a dressed-up sheep? By all the devils you shall pay me, or——

(Agnelet rushes out.)

Brueys and Palaprat (1640-1723, 1650-1721).

THE NOSE.

I.

ONE morning Azora returned from a walk in a terrible passion, and uttering the most violent exclamations.

"What ails you, my dear spouse?" said Zadig. "What can have thus discomposed you?"

"Alas!" she said, "you would be as much enraged as I am, if you had seen what I've just beheld. I have been to comfort the young widow Cosrou, who within these two days has raised a tomb to her young husband, near the rivulet that washes the skirts of this meadow. In the bitterness of her grief, she vowed to heaven to remain at the tomb as long as the water of the rivulet continued to run by it."

"Well," said Zadig, "she is an excellent woman, and loved her husband with the most sincere affection."

"Ah!" said Azora, "if you only knew what she was doing when I went to see her!"

“Was she engaged, beautiful Azora, in turning the course of the rivulet?”

Azora broke out into such long invectives, and loaded the young widow with such bitter reproaches, that Zadig was far from being pleased with this ostentation of virtue.

II.

Zadig had a friend named Cador, whom he made his confidant.

Azora having passed two days with a friend in the country, returned home on the third.

The servants told her, with tears in their eyes, that her husband died suddenly the night before, and that they had just deposited his corpse in the tomb of his ancestors at the end of the garden.

She wept, tore her hair, and swore she would follow him to the grave.

In the evening Cador begged leave to wait on her, and joined his tears with hers. Next day they wept less, and dined together. Cador told her that his friend had left him the greater part of his estate, and that he should think himself extremely happy in sharing his fortune with her. The lady wept, fell into a passion, and at last became more mild and gentle. They sat longer at supper than at dinner, and talked with greater confidence. Azora praised the deceased, but owned that he had many failings from which Cador was free.

During supper Cador complained of a violent pain in his side. The lady, in great concern, tried all sorts of remedies. She even condescended to touch the side in which Cador felt such exquisite pain, and compassionately inquired if he was subject to this cruel disorder. “It sometimes brings me to the brink of the grave,” replied Cador. “There is but one remedy that can give me relief, and that is to apply to my side the nose of a man lately dead.” Feeling

sure that in his journey to the other world her husband would not be refused a passage because his nose was a little shorter in the second life than it was in the first, the lady took a razor and went to her husband's tomb. She bedewed it with her tears and drew near to cut off Zadig's

"THE LADY TOOK A RAZOR AND WENT TO HER HUSBAND'S TOMB."

nose. He arose, holding his nose with one hand and putting back the razor with the other.

"Madam," he said, "don't exclaim so violently against young Cosrou. The project of cutting off my nose is equal to that of turning the course of a rivulet."

Voltaire (1694-1778).

FASHIONABLE EDUCATION.

THE father and mother provided a tutor for the young marquis. This tutor, who was a man of fashion, and who knew nothing, of course could teach nothing to his pupil. Monsieur wished his son to learn Latin; Madame wished him not: accordingly they called in as an arbitrator an author, who was at that time celebrated for some very pleasing works. He was asked to dinner. The master of the house began by asking him, "Monsieur, as you understand Latin, and are a courtier——"

"I, sir, understand Latin? not a word," replied the wit; "and very glad am I that I don't; for there is not a doubt but a man always speaks his own language the better when his studies are not divided between that and foreign languages."

"There, now! was I not right?" said Madame. "I wish my son to be a wit, that he may make a figure in the world; and you see if he learns Latin he is inevitably lost. Are comedies or operas played in Latin? In a lawsuit does any one plead in Latin? Do we make love in Latin?"

Monsieur, dazzled by all this ratiocination, gave his judgment, and it was finally determined that the young marquis should not waste his time in becoming acquainted with Cicero, Horace, and Virgil. But then what was he to learn? for he must know something: could not he be shown a little geography?

"What would that serve?" replied the tutor. "When Monsieur the marquis goes to any of his estates, won't the postillions know which way to drive him? They'll certainly take care not to go out of their way. A man may go from

Paris to Auvergne very comfortably without having the least idea what latitude he is under."

"You are right," replied the father; "but I have somewhere heard of a very beautiful science, called, I think, astronomy."

"The more's the pity, then," cried the tutor. "Does any one regulate himself by the stars in this world? Is it necessary that the young marquis should murder himself by calculating an eclipse, when he will find its very point of time in the almanac, a book which will teach him, moreover, the movable feasts and fasts, the age of the moon, and that of all the princesses in Europe?" Madame was entirely of the tutor's opinion; the little marquis was overjoyed. The father was greatly undecided.

"What must my son learn, then?" said he.

"To make himself agreeable. If," replied the friend whom they had consulted, "he knows but how to please, he knows everything. That is an art he can learn from his mother, without giving the least trouble either to that master or this."

At this speech Madame embraced the polite ignoramus and said to him, "It's very plain, sir, that you are the most learned man in the whole world; my son will owe his entire education to you. However, I think it will be as well he should know a little of history."

"Alas, Madame, what is that good for?" he replied. "There is nothing either so pleasing or so instructive as the history of the day. As one of our wits said, ancient history is only a collection of fables, and modern history a chaos impossible to solve. What does it signify to your son that Charlemagne instituted the twelve peers of France, and that his successor was a stutterer?"

"Nothing was ever better said," cried the tutor. "The minds of children are overwhelmed with a mass of useless knowledge; but of all absurd sciences, that which in my

opinion is the most likely to stifle the spark of genius is geometry. This ridiculous science has for its object surfaces, lines, and points which have no existence in nature. In short, geometry is nothing but an execrable joke."

Monsieur and Madame did not understand much of what the tutor said, but they were entirely of his opinion.



At length, after examining the merits and demerits of every science, it was decided that the young marquis should learn to dance.

Voltaire.

WAR.

IT is unquestionably a very notable art to ravage countries, destroy dwellings, and, *communibus annis*, out of a hundred thousand men to cut off forty thousand. This invention was originally cultivated by nations assembled for their common good; for instance, the Diet of the Greeks sent word to the Diet of Phrygia and its neighbours, that they were putting to sea in a thousand fishing-boats, in order to do their best to cut them off root and branch.

The Roman people, in a general assembly, resolved that it was their interest to go and fight the Veientes, or the Volscians, before harvest; and some years after all the Romans, being angry with all the Carthaginians, fought a long time both by sea and land. It is otherwise in our time.

A genealogist sets forth to a prince that he is descended in a direct line from a count, whose kindred, three or four hundred years ago, had made a family compact with a house, the very memory of which is extinguished. The house had some distant claim to a province, the last proprietor of which died of an apoplexy. The prince and his council instantly resolve that this province belongs to him by Divine right. The province, which is some hundred leagues from him, protests that it does not so much as know him; that it is not disposed to be governed by him; that before prescribing laws to them, their consent at least was necessary. These allegations do not so much as reach the prince's ears; it is insisted on that his right is incontestable. He instantly picks up a multitude of men, who have nothing to do, nor nothing to lose; clothes them with coarse blue cloth, one *sou* to the ell; puts on them hats bound with coarse white worsted; makes them turn to the right and left; and thus marches away with them to glory.

Other princes, on this armament, take part in it—to the best of their ability, and soon cover a small extent of country with more hireling murderers than Gengis-Khan, Tamerlane, and Bajazet had at their heels.

People at no small distance, on hearing that fighting is going forward, and that if they would make one, there are five or six *sous* a day for them, immediately divide into two bands, like reapers, and go and sell their services to the first bidder.

These multitudes furiously butcher one another, not only without having any concern in the quarrel, but without so much as knowing what it is about.

Sometimes five or six powers are engaged, three against three, two against four, sometimes even one against five, all equally detesting one another; and, friends and foes by turns, agreeing only in one thing, to do all the mischief possible.

Voltaire.

THE LAWS OF THE TABLE.

THE guests should always be at ease
 However sumptuous is the fare,
 No banquet can my palate please
 If dull constraint is reigning there.
 If in a house constraint I find,
 Again, be sure, I never come;
 No invitation's to my mind,
 Save when I feel myself at home.

The rigid laws of etiquette
 Were made our happiness to mar;
 All rules of "place" at once forget,
 And take your seats just as you are.

Leave only a sufficient space
That each may have his elbows free,
Nor ever let a lovely face
Tempt you to break this sound decree.

An over-civil guest avoid,
Who tortures you from pure good-will,
Who loads your plate till you are cloy'd,
And *must* incessant bumpers fill.
Enjoyment liberty requires,
Let none control my glass or plate ;
Let each man take what he desires,
Upon himself let each man wait.

Some boast that they can bravely drink,
But let us shun the toper's fame ;
It is an honour which, I think,
Is very much akin to shame.

The magic of the potent cup
 Can make the wit a heavy lout ;
 We'll drink to light the spirit up,
 But not to put its lustre out.

If for a song or tune we ask,
 Let him who's called to sing or play,
 Not seem as 'twere a heavy task ;
 Let him strike up without delay.
 And let him know when he should cease ;
 Oh, dreadful is that wretched man
 Who, when he tries his friends to please,
 To tire them out does all he can.

My counsel, friends, would you deride ?
 Nay, this is true,—be sure of it,—
 Reason should ever be our guide,
 E'en when we at the table sit.
 To grow more gay you will not fail,
 When, dinner done, the sweets appear,
 But still, that order may prevail,
 My little code perhaps you'll hear :

“No vulgar clamour in your song,
 No raptures that transcend all bounds ;
 No narrative spun out too long,
 No sarcasm that the hearer wounds.
 Bon-mots without a bad intent,
 Vivacity from rudeness free ;
 Without a quarrel, argument,
 And without licence, liberty.”

Panard (1694-1765).

VER-VERT.

"A PARROT LIVED AS PARLOUR-BOARDER."

IN old Nevers, so famous for its
Dark narrow streets and Gothic turrets,
Close on the brink of Loire's young flood,
Flourished a convent sisterhood
Of *Ursulines*. Now in this order
A parrot lived as parlour-boarder ;
Brought in his childhood from the *Antilles*,
And sheltered under convent mantles ;
Green were his feathers, green his pinions,
And greener still were his opinions ;

For vice had not yet sought to pervert
 This bird, who had been christened Ver-Vert ;
 Nor could the wicked world defile him,
 Safe from its snares in this asylum.
 Fresh, in his teens, frank, gay, loquacious ;
 If we examine close, not one, or he,
 Had a vocation for a nunnery.¹

The convent's kindness need I mention ?
 Need I detail each fond attention,
 Or count the tit-bits which *in Lent* he
 Swallowed remorseless and in plenty ?
 Plump was his carcass ; no, not higher
 Fed was their confessor the friar ;
 And some even say that our young Hector
 Was far more loved than the " Director " !²
 Dear to each novice and each nun—
 He was the soul of life and fun ;
 Though, to be sure, some hags censorious
 Would sometimes find him too uproarious.
 What did the parrot care for those old
 Dames, while he had for him the household ?
 He had not yet made his " profession,"
 Nor come to years called of " discretion " ;
 Therefore, unblamed, he ogled, flirted,
 And romped like any unconverted ;
 Nay, sometimes, too, by the Lord Harry !
 He'd pull their caps and " scapulary."
 But what in all his tricks seemed oddest,
 Was that at times he'd turn so modest,
 That to all bystanders the wight
 Appeared a finished hypocrite.

¹ " *Par son caquet digne d'être en couvent.*"

² " *Souvent l'oiseau l'emporta sur le Père.*"

Placed when at table near some vestal,
 His fare, be sure, was of the best all,—
 For every sister would endeavour
 To keep for him some sweet *hors d'œuvre*.
 Kindly at heart, in spite of vows and
 Cloisters, a nun is worth a thousand!
 And aye, if Heaven would only lend her,
 I'd have a nun for a nurse tender!¹

Then, when the shades of night would come on,
 And to their cells the sisters summon,
 Happy the favoured one whose grotto
 This sultan of a bird would trot to :
 Mostly the young ones' cells he toyed in
 (The aged sisterhood avoiding),
 Sure among all to find kind offices,—
 Still he was partial to the novices,
 And in *their* cells our anchorite
 Mostly cast anchor for the night;
 Perched on the box that held the relics, he
 Slept without notion of indelicacy.
 Rare was his luck; nor did he spoil it
 By flying from the morning toilet;
 Not that I can admit the fitness
 Of (at the toilet) a male witness;
 But that I scruple in this history
 To shroud a single fact in mystery.

Quick at all arts, our bird was rich at
 That best accomplishment, called chit-chat;
 For, though brought up within the cloister,
 His beak was not closed like an oyster,

¹ "*Les petits soins, les attentions fines,
 Sont nés, dit on, chez les Ursulines.*"

But, trippingly, without a stutter,
 The longest sentences would utter;
 Pious withal and moralising,
 His conversation was surprising;
 None of your equivoques, no slander—
 To such vile tastes he scorned to pander;
 But his tongue ran most smooth and nice on
 “Deo sit laus” and “Kyrie eleison”;
 The maxims he gave with best emphasis
 Were Suarez’s or Thomas à Kempis’s;
 In Christmas carols he was famous,
 “Orate, fratres,” and “OREMUS”;
 Or, by particular desire, he
 Would chant the hymn of “Dies iræ.”
 Then in the choir he would amaze all
 By copying the tone so nasal
 In which the sainted sisters chanted,—
 (At least that pious nun my aunt did).

Fame, O Ver-Vert! in evil humour,
 One day to Nantes had brought the rumour
 Of thy accomplishments,—“acumen,”
 “Nous,” and “esprit,” quite superhuman:
 All these reports but served to enhance
 Thy merits with the nuns of Nantes.
 How did a matter so unsuited
 For convent ears get hither bruited?
 Some may inquire. But “nuns are knowing,”
*And first to hear what gossip’s going.*¹
 Forthwith they taxed their wits to elicit
 From the famed bird a friendly visit.
 Girls’ wishes run in a brisk current,

¹ “*Les révérendes mères
 A tout savoir ne sont pas les dernières.*”

But a nun's fancy is a torrent,¹
 To get this bird they'd pawn the missal :
 Quick they indite a long epistle,
 Careful with softest things to fill it,
 And then with musk perfume the billet.

Off goes the post. When will the answer
 Free them from doubt's corroding cancer?
 Nothing can equal their anxiety,
 Except, of course, their well-known piety.
 Things at Nevers meantime went harder
 Than well would suit such pious ardour ;
 It was no easy job to coax
 This parrot from the Nevers folks.

En ce tems là, a small canal boat,
 Called by most chroniclers the "Talbot,"
 (TALBOT, a name well known in France !)
 Travelled between Nevers and Nantes.
 Ver-Vert took shipping in this craft,
 'Tis not said whether fore or aft ;
 But in a book as old as Massinger's
 We find a statement of the passengers ;
 These were—two Gascons and a piper,
 A sexton (a notorious swiper),
 A brace of children and a nurse ;
 But what was infinitely worse,
 A dashing Cyprian ; while by her
 Sat a most jolly-looking friar.

For a poor bird brought up in purity
 'Twas a sad augur for futurity

¹ "*Désir de fille est un feu qui dévore,
 Désir de nonne est cent fois pis encore.*"

To meet, just free from his indentures,
 And in the first of his adventures,
 Such company as formed his hansel,—
 Two rogues !, a friar !! and a damsel !!!
 Birds the above were of a feather ;
 But to Ver-Vert 'twas altogether
 Such a strange aggregate of scandals
 As to be met but among Vandals ;
 Rude was their talk, bereft of polish,
 And calculated to demolish
 All the fine notions and good breeding
 Taught by the nuns in their sweet Eden.
 No Billingsgate surpassed the nurse's,
 And all the rest indulged in curses ;
 Ear hath not heard such vulgar gab in
 The nautic cell of any cabin.
 Silent and sad, the pensive bird,
 Shocked at their guilt, said not a word.

Now he " of orders grey," accosting
 The parrot green, who seemed quite lost in
 The contemplation of man's wickedness,
 And the bright river's gliding liquidness,
 " Tip us a stave (quoth Tuck), my darling ;
 Ain't you a parrot or a starling ?
 If you don't talk, by the holy poker,
 I'll give that neck of yours a choker !"
 Scared by this threat from his propriety,
 Our pilgrim thinking with sobriety,
 That if he did not speak they'd make him,
 Answered the friar *PAX SIT TECUM!*
 Here our reporter marks down after
 Poll's maiden-speech—" loud roars of laughter ;"
 And sure enough the bird so affable,
 Could hardly use a phrase more laughable.

Poll's brief address met lots of cavillers ;
Badgered by all his fellow-travellers,
He tried to mend a speech so ominous
By striking up with *Dixit Dominus* !
But louder shouts of laughter follow,—
This last roar beats the former hollow,
And shows that it was bad economy
To give a stave from Deuteronomy.

Posed, not abashed, the bird refused to
Indulge a scene he was not used to ;
And, pondering on his strange reception,
“ There must,” he thought, “ be some deception
In the nuns' views of things rhetorical,
And Sister Rose is not an oracle.
True wit, perhaps, lies not in *mattins*,
Nor is *their* school a school of Athens.”

Thus in this villainous receptacle
The simple bird at once grew sceptical.
Doubts lead to hell. The arch-deceiver
Soon made of Poll an unbeliever ;
And mixing thus in bad society,
He took French leave of all his piety.

His austere maxims soon he mollified,
And all his old opinions qualified ;
For he had learned to substitute
For pious lore things more astute ;
Nor was his conduct unimpeachable,
For youth, alas ! is but too teachable ;
And in the progress of his madness
Soon he had reached the depths of badness.

Such were his *curses*, such his evil
Practices, that no ancient devil,
Plunged to the chin when burning hot
Into a holy water-pot,
Could so blaspheme, or fire a volley
Of oaths so drear and melancholy.

Scarce in the port was this small craft
On its arrival telegraphed,
When, from the boat home to transfer him,
Came the nuns' portress, "Sister Jerome."
Well did the parrot recognise
The walk demure and downcast eyes ;
Nor aught such saintly guidance relished
A bird by worldly arts embellished ;
Such was his taste for profane gaiety,
He'd rather much go with the laity.
Fast to the bark he clung ; but plucked thence,
He showed dire symptoms of reluctance,
And, scandalising each beholder,
Bit the nun's cheek, and eke her shoulder !
Thus was Ver-Vert, heart-sick and weary,
Brought to the heavenly monastery.
The bell and tidings both were tolled,
And the nuns crowded, young and old,
To feast their eyes with joy uncommon on
This wondrous talkative phenomenon.

Round the bright stranger, so amazing
And so renowned, the sisters gazing,
Praised the green glow which a warm latitude
Gave to his neck, and liked his attitude.
Some by his gorgeous tail are smitten,
Some by his beak so beauteous bitten !

And none e'er dreamt of dole or harm in
A bird so brilliant and so charming.

Meantime the abbess, to "draw out"
A bird so modest and devout,
With soothing air and tongue caressing,
The "pilgrim of the Loire" addressing,
Broached the most edifying topics
To "start" this native of the tropics ;
When, to their scandal and amaze, he
Broke forth—" *Morbleu ! those nuns are crazy !*"
(Showing how well he learnt his task on
The packet-boat from that vile Gascon !)
"Fie ! brother poll !" with zeal outbursting,
Exclaimed the abbess, dame Augustin ;
But all the lady's sage rebukes
Brief answer got from poll—"Gadzooks !"
Scared at the sound—"Sure as a gun,
The bird's a demon !" cried the nun.
"O the vile wretch ! the naughty dog !
He's surely Lucifer *incog*.
What ! is the reprobate before us
That bird so pious and decorous—
So celebrated ?" Here the pilgrim,
Hearing sufficient to bewilder him,
Wound up the sermon of the beldame
By a conclusion heard but seldom—
"Ventre Saint Gris !" "Parbleu !" and "Sacre !"
Three oaths, and every one a whacker !
Stunned at these sounds of import stygian,
The pious daughters of religion
Fled from a scene so dread, so horrid,
But with a cross first signed their forehead.
The younger sisters, mild and meek,
Thought that the culprit spoke in Greek ;

But the old matrons and "the bench"
Knew every word was genuine French;
And ran in all directions, pell-mell,
From a flood fit to overwhelm hell.
'Twas by a fall that Mother Ruth
Then lost her last remaining tooth.
Straight in a cage the nuns insert
The guilty person of Ver-Vert.

Back to the convent of his youth,
Sojourn of innocence and truth,
Sails the green monster, scorned and hated,
His heart with vice contaminated.
Must I tell how, on his return,
He scandalised his own sojourn?
And how the guardians of his infancy
Wept o'er their quondam child's delinquency?
What could be done? The elders often
Met to consult how best to soften
This obdurate and hardened sinner,
Finished in vice ere a beginner!
One mother counselled "to denounce,
And let the Inquisition pounce
On the vile heretic;" another
Thought "it was best the bird to smother!"
Or "send the convict for his felonies
Back to his native land—the colonies."
But milder views prevailed. His sentence
Was, that until he showed repentance,
"A solemn fast and frugal diet,
Silence exact, and pensive quiet,
Should be his lot;" and, for a blister,
He got, as gaoler, a lay sister,
Ugly as sin, bad-tempered, jealous,
And in her scruples over-zealous.

A jug of water and a carrot
Was all the prog she'd give the parrot :
But every eve when vesper-bell
Called Sister Rosalie from her cell,
She to Ver-Vert would gain admittance,
And bring of "comfits" a sweet pittance.
Comfits ! alas ! can sweet confections
Alter sour slavery's imperfections ?
The sternest virtue in the hulks,
Though crammed with richest sweetmeats, sulks.

Taught by his gaoler and adversity,
Poll saw the folly of perversity,
And by degrees his heart relented :
Duly, in fine, "the lad" repented.
His *Lent* passed on, and Sister Bridget
Coaxed the old abbess to abridge it.

The prodigal, reclaimed and free,
Became again a prodigy,
And gave more joy, by works and words,
Than ninety-nine canary-birds,
Until his death. Which last disaster
(Nothing on earth endures !) came faster
Than they imagined. The transition
From a starved to a stuffed condition,
From penitence to jollification,
Brought on a fit of constipation.
And from a short life and a merry,
Poll sailed one day per Charon's ferry.

Gresset (1709-1777).

THE OLD DRESSING-GOWN.

WHY did I let it go? It was made for me and I for it. It moulded itself to the shape of my body without confining it. I was picturesque and handsome. The other, tight and stiff, makes a puppet of me. Its kindliness supplied my every need, for poverty is almost always good-natured. If a book was dusty, one of its tails was ready to wipe it. If the ink in my pen was thick and refused to flow, it offered its side. The many services it rendered me are marked in long black lines that show the man of letters, the writer, the worker. Now I look like a rich idler. No one knows who I am.

"IF A BOOK WAS DUSTY, ONE OF ITS TAILS
WAS READY TO WIPE IT."

In it I feared neither a servant's awkwardness nor my own, neither the effects of fire nor of water. I was absolute king of my old dressing-gown; I am the slave of the new one.

The dragon who guarded the golden fleece could not have had a more anxious time. Care envelops me.

I neither weep nor sigh, but every minute I say: Cursed be he who invented the art of giving value to common material by dyeing it crimson. Cursed be the precious garment that I respect. Where is my ancient, humble, comfortable rag of linsey-woolsey?

Comrades, do not part with your old friends; comrades, beware of the possession of riches. Be warned by my example. To poverty belongs freedom, to opulence, slavery.

That is not all, my friends. List to the ravages of luxury, the consequences consequent on luxury.

My old dressing-gown was at accord with the rest of the rubbish that formed my surroundings, and made with it the most harmonious poverty.

Everything is now disarranged. There is no longer harmony, unity, or beauty.

A new housekeeper in a parsonage, a wife in the house of a widower, the minister who replaces a fallen minister, the molinist bishop who succeeds to the diocese of a jansenist bishop, do not create more disturbance than the crimson intruder has caused in my house.

Diderot (1713-1784)

THE BARBER OF SEVILLE.

Count. What a grotesque figure!

Figaro. I'm not mistaken, it's Count Almaviva.

Count. I really believe it's that knave Figaro.

Fig. It's his own self, my lord.

Count. Silence, puppy; if you say a word——

Fig. I am now certain it's you, my lord, for you always treated me with this familiarity and kindness.

Count. It was with difficulty I recollected you. You are so much increased in bulk.

Fig. It's the effect of mere want, my lord; how can I help it?

Count. I pity you; but how came you at Seville? I recommended you to an employment at Madrid.

Fig. I obtained it, my lord, and my gratitude.

Count. Well, and this employment?



COUNT: "YOU ARE SO MUCH INCREASED IN BULK."

FIGARO: "IT'S THE EFFECT OF WANT, MY LORD."

Fig. The minister, paying due regard to your excellency's recommendation, appointed me immediately to the office of apothecary's assistant.

Count. In the Military Hospital?

Fig. No, in the royal stables of Andalusia.

Count. That was an honourable preferment.

Fig. The place was not so indifferent neither; for having in my department the care of the drugs, I frequently had an opportunity of selling to my fellow-creatures excellent horse medicines.

Count. And by those means killed his Majesty's liege subjects.

Fig. Why, there is no such thing as a universal remedy ; but I have more than once succeeded with Gallicans, Catalonians, Auvergnans, and wandering Scotchmen !

Count. And wherefore, then, did you quit it ?

Fig. Quit it, my lord ! It quitted me. Some evil-minded villain hurt my interest with the minister. (*Heroically.*) Pale, ghastly envy, with her cruel talons !

Count. Oh ! mercy ! mercy ! And do you make verses as well as medicines ? I thought I perceived you scribbling on one knee, and singing your works so early.

Fig. This unfortunate turn was the cause of my disgrace ; when the minister heard I had made verses (tolerable good ones, too, I may without vanity say), poems to Chloris, sent riddles to the Diaries, and that some madrigals in my style were handed about—in short, when he found I was printed alive, he took the matter in a serious light, and turned me out of my employment, under pretext that the love of the muses and attention to horse affairs were incompatible.

Count. Most profound wisdom ! And did you not remonstrate ?

Fig. No ; I thought myself blessed in being forgotten, knowing from observation that a great man shows us a particular kindness when he does us no injury.

Count. I don't believe you're telling the whole truth. I remember you had but a dubious character when in my service.

Fig. My God ! my lord, you rich folks always would have us poor ones be entirely without faults.

Count. Idle, debauched——

Fig. According to the perfections you fine gentlemen expect in your servants, does your excellency think many of your acquaintance worthy the office of valet ?

Count (aside). That's not bad.

Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799).

TO CATHERINE DE MEDICIS, REGENT.

IF faithful to five kings I've been,
And forty years have filled the scene,
Till learning's stream a torrent grows,
And France with knowledge overflows,
While fame is ours from shore to shore,
For ancient and for modern lore,
Methinks, if I deserve such fame,
And nations thus applaud my name,
'Twill sound but ill that men should say :
" Beneath the Regent Catherine's sway,—
Patron of arts, of wits the pride,—
Of want and famine Dorat died ! "

Jean Dorat (1734-1780).

MAXIMS.

THE public! the public! How many fools does it take to make a public?

WHAT is celebrity? The advantage of being known to people who don't know you.

SOCIETY is composed of two large classes: those who have more dinners than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinners.

IN society you have three sorts of friends. There are your friends who love you, your friends who care nothing at all about you, and your friends who hate you.

THE most wasted of all days is that on which we have not laughed.

CHANGE of fashion is the tax laid on the vanity of the rich by the industry of the poor.

ANECDOTES.

"YOU'RE yawning," said a wife to her husband. "My dear," he replied, "husband and wife are one, and when I'm alone I feel bored."

FOR twenty years a man spent every evening at Madame Z.'s. He lost his wife. It was thought he would marry Madame Z., and his friends advised him to do so. "I shouldn't know where to spend my evenings," he replied.

My neighbour at dinner asked me if the lady opposite him was the wife of the man sitting next her. I had

noticed that he had not spoken a single syllable to her, and therefore replied: "Sir, either he does not know her, or she is his wife."

Chamfort (1741-1794).

THE LITTLE GARGANTUA.

WHEN we have learn'd to eat and drink,
 There's nothing more we need on earth;
 The richest, without jaws, I think,
 Would find their riches little worth.

A faithful mistress is the board,
 It won our childhood's earliest sighs,
 Its charms by infants are adored,
 Its pleasures tottering age can prize—
 When we have learn'd, etc.

A world of pains the pedant takes,—
 But for his learning what care I,
 When where the cook a fortune makes,
 The booksellers of hunger die?
 When we have learn'd, etc.

Demosthenes and Cicero
 Are doubtless stately names to hear,
 The name of good Amphitryo
 Sounds far more pleasant in mine ear.
 When we have learn'd, etc.

The treasures which were heap'd around,
 To Midas were an empty show,
 All had he given to have found
 A sav'ry dish of fricandeau.
 When we have learn'd, etc.

If upon love I waste an hour,
And bear its wearisome delight,
It is because love has the power
To sharpen up my appetite.
When we have learn'd, etc.

Columbus sadly toil'd, we're told,
That he another world might see;
A stately globe would you behold?—
My worthy friends, just look at me.
When we have learn'd, etc.

Pale grief and envy eat not much,
And therefore they are always thin;
An ample paunch will ever vouch
For goodness resident therein.
When we have learn'd, etc.

If Jean Jacques wore a sullen air,
While Panard never learn'd to pout,
It was because Jean Jacques was spare,
It was because Panard was stout.
When we have learn'd, etc.

Here—here within this festive hall
To Comus we'll a statue raise,
And while this ardour fires us all,
We'll write on it these words of praise:
When we have learn'd, etc.

The statue o'er our feasts shall reign,
And guard them with its power divine:
Then animation it shall gain
From fumes of sauces and of wine.
When we have learn'd, etc.

Our incense in a vapour dense,
 Shall with our drunken wisdom rise,
 And gods shall hear these words of sense,
 While they are feasting in the skies.
 When we have learn'd, etc.

Désaugiers (1772-1827).

PARIS: FIVE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

NOW the darkness breaks,
 Flight it slowly takes ;
 Now the morning wakes,
 Roofs around to gild:
 Lamps give paler light,
 Houses grow more white ;
 Now the day's in sight,
 Markets all are fill'd.

From La Vilette
 Comes young Susette,
 Her flow'rs to set
 Upon the quay.
 His donkey, Pierre
 Is driving near,
 From Vincennes here
 His fruit brings he.

Florists ope their eyes,
 Oyster-women rise,
 Grocers, who are wise,
 Start from bed at dawn ;
 Artisans now toil,
 Poets paper soil,
 Pedants eye-sight spoil,
 Idlers only yawn.

I see Javotte,
 Who cries "Carotte!"
 And sells a lot
 Of parsnips cheap.
 Her voice so shrill
 The air can fill,
 And drown it will
 The chimney-sweep.

Now the gamester's seen ;
 With a haggard mien,
 And his pocket clean,
 Swearing, home he goes ;
 While the drunkard lies
 On his path, more wise,
 Making music rise
 From his blushing nose.

In yonder house
 They still carouse,
 Change loving vows,
 And sing and play.
 Through all the night,
 In sorry plight,
 A wretched wight
 Before it lay.

Now the patient rings,
 Till the servant brings
 Draughts and other things,
 Such as doctors know ;
 While his lady fair
 Feigns with modest air
 (Love is lurking there !)
 For a bath to go.

Love's pilgrims creep
With purpose deep,
And measured step
 Where none can see ;
The diligence
Is leaving France,
To seek Mayence
 Or Italy.

“ Dear papa, adieu,
Good-bye, mother too,
And the same to you,
 Ev'ry little one.”
Now the horses neigh,
Now the whip's in play,
Windows ring away—
 Out of sight they're gone.

In ev'ry place
New things I trace,
No empty place
 Can now be found.
But great and small,
And short and tall,
Tag-rag and all,
 In crowds abound.

Ne'er the like has been ;
Now they all begin
Such a grievous din,
 They will split my head ;
How I feel it ache
With the noise they make ;—
Paris is awake,
 So I'll go to bed.

Désaugiers.

THE TABLE.

AN epicure, I mean to sing
The table, as a subject fitting,
'Tis certainly a useful thing,
And friendship's ties is ever knitting.
Censure its weapons may unsheathe,
To stop my song it is unable ;
So fearless of the critic's teeth,
I here discourse upon the table.

A tribute must be due of course
To such an universal mother.
Of life the table is the source ;
Indeed, my friend, I know no other ;
The pillow, where you lay your head,
Is soft, but raises visions sable ;
The dying wretch is on his bed,
The jolly dog is at his table.

A dish that scatters rich perfumes
Must charm the sense beyond all measure,
The anxious nose the steam consumes,
Inhaling mighty draughts of pleasure :
Compared to feasting, songs, and mirth,
All other joys are but unstable,
The coldest heart that beats on earth,
Is melted by a smoking table.

Two rivals hear the church-clock tell
The moment that their life will take fast ;
The second knows his business well,
Who asks them both to come to breakfast.
All anger soon in wine is drown'd—
To do such wonders wine is able—
The rivals had been underground,
Had they not rather sat at table.

Fat Raymond's door is ev'ry day
Besieg'd by countless cabs and chaises,
City and Court their visits pay,
And all alike resound his praises.
" His virtues, then, must be most rare,
That thus his fame mounts up like Babel."
" Not so."—" Then vast his talents are ?"
" No, but he keeps a first-rate table."

At table, on affairs we muse,
 At table marriage contracts settle,
 At table win, and sometimes lose,
 At table wrangling shows our mettle ;
 At table Cupid plumes his wing,
 At table we write truth or fable,
 At table we do everything,
 So let us never leave the table.

Désaugiers.

VIRGINIE'S JOURNEY.

THIRTY miles is a long journey to a girl who has never been farther from Belleville than to the Bois de Romainville, and it is nearly as far as that from Belleville to Genlis. Virginie expected to see very strange things, picturesque views, even new costumes, and she kept her head almost always out of the window, for her aunt's carriage had two little windows at the sides.

M. Baisemon sat beside her. The carriage had only two seats, and the front one was occupied by Grilloie. Although the vehicle was large, the enormous corpulence of Virginie's companion filled two-thirds of the space. Whenever the girl moved to look out of the window, or to lean out of the door, she invariably knocked up against some part of her neighbour's body, saying, "Good gracious, Monsieur, how fat you are !"

Baisemon replied humbly, smiling at every blow he received, "The fact is, Mademoiselle, that Providence has been prodigal to me, and overwhelmed me with favours."

"Can't you make yourself a bit smaller ?"

"Mademoiselle, my outer crust is touching the framework of the carriage, I can't squeeze up more."

"But I like to move about."

"Move about as much as you like, Mademoiselle, don't mind me. It gives me all the pleasure in the world to be knocked about."

Virginie said no more, but she continued to lean out, to sit forward, and to send her arm into her neighbour's face. But the country did not change as the young traveller had imagined, and Virginie turned to her companion, and remarked—

"Travelling's not as amusing as I thought. Shan't we see anything but this all the way to my aunt's, Monsieur?"

"We shall see the village of Vanderland, which is very ugly; that of Louvres, where they make excellent ratafia."

"But torrents, precipices, rocks, cascades, I'd rather see those than ratafia."

"There aren't any between this and Senlis; the country is flat, much nicer for driving than picturesque and mountainous districts."

"Where, then, must you go to see all the strange things I'm dying to know?"

"Ah! Mademoiselle, there are indeed countries where everything would astonish you!"

"Have you been in all those countries, Monsieur Baisemon?"

"No; I've read about them, and therefore I may be wrong, because books often lie. I don't care about travelling. I prefer my own fireside and a good dinner, things difficult to procure on a journey. Mademoiselle, what do you say to a bite of something?"

"Eat if you wish, I'm not hungry. Besides, how is one to eat in a carriage?"

"It's not as comfortable as at a table, yet, all the same, you can do it, and even take pleasure in it."

"Why, when we reach a village, do we not stop at an inn and dine comfortably?"

"Mademoiselle, I am truly grieved not to accede to your wishes, but I have my orders, and must carry them out."

"What do you mean?"

"That we are not to stop, except just for a second to breathe the horse, and that you are not to get out of the carriage until we reach your aunt's."

"What! I'm not to get out of the carriage; but if I require to get out?"

"You will not require to get out, since we have food and drink with us."

"But, Monsieur, I might want something else."

"When you get to your aunt's——"

"Ah! that's going a little too far, if I'm to wait till then."

And Virginie in a rage threw herself back in the carriage at the risk of suffocating her neighbour. He took some provisions out of a basket, cut a big slice of pie, which he demolished with the greatest enjoyment, washing it down with an occasional glass of wine. Virginie began to look out of the window again in the hope of discovering fellow-travellers. But those she desired to see were not visible, and she lost her temper. She threw herself back into her place just when Baisemon was lifting his glass to his lips, and made him upset the wine over his waistcoat. But the fat man merely smiled and murmured, "It's of no consequence; we have several bottles."

At last M. Baisemon finished eating, and seemed disposed to sleep. Virginie was careful not to prevent him. She put her head out of the window to see if she could discover Doudoux or Godibert on the horizon.

They drove on for half-an-hour. Baisemon was asleep, and if by accident Virginie knocked against him, he muttered, "Don't disturb yourself, make yourself at home."

At length Virginie thought she perceived a pedestrian in

the distance making great efforts to reach their carriage. She tapped Grilloie on the shoulder, and said—

“Stop, Grilloie, I want to get out.”

“But, Mademoiselle, you——”

“I tell you to stop; I want to get out.”

Grilloie stopped. The cessation of movement awoke Baisemon, who cried out. “What is it? What’s the matter? Why have we stopped?”

“Because I want to get out for a few minutes, Monsieur Baisemon.”

“Mademoiselle, it is impossible. I was expressly forbidden——”

“Monsieur, I repeat that I must get out.”

By this time the pedestrian had come up with the carriage. It was Godibert in travelling costume, a stick with a bundle at the end over his shoulder. Virginie saw him, recognised him, smiled at him, and quickly got into the carriage. Baisemon did the same with the aid of Grilloie, whom he used as a pair of steps. They continued their journey.

Virginie recovered her spirits on seeing Godibert. She wanted to know if he was following the carriage. But just as she put her head out of the window, she encountered a hand. Godibert had got up behind the carriage, and wanted to show Virginie that he was near her. She leaned over; the young man did the same. They could look at each other, even speak together.

“Take care you don’t fall,” said Virginie in a whisper.

“Don’t alarm yourself.”

“You’re very uncomfortable there.”

“An old soldier can put up with anything. It’s rather shaky, but you soon get accustomed to the movement.”

And Godibert leaned further over in order to see Virginie better, at the risk of falling under the wheel on which he is

balancing his body. But tell a lover to be careful—when he is, he will have ceased to love.

Baisemon half opened his eyes, and said: "I think Mademoiselle was good enough to speak to me?"

"You thought wrong, Monsieur."

"But I heard——"

"If I like to talk to myself, am I forbidden to do so?"

"No, certainly not, Mademoiselle; but when you wish to chat, I shall consider it my duty to reply."

"I would rather talk to myself and see you sleep."

Baisemon closed his eyes once more. Virginie again put her head out of the window, and Godibert leaned forward.

"They are taking you to your aunt's, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes."

"Is she a nice woman?"

"She's an old maid as horrid as the mange."

"The devil! Will she give you any liberty?"

"None whatever."

"Do you think I may call on her?"

"Certainly not, neither you nor any man under fifty."

"That's a pretty state of things! I must see you, however. I've not followed you merely to look at your aunt's house."

"We must search, invent, imagine——"

"Gee up, then, Cocotte; whoa, what's up with the beast, she's going so slowly, just as if I was heavier than before."

And Grilloie whipped his horse, who, however, went no quicker. Baisemon opened his eyes, crying—

"What's the matter? Why, Grilloie, you're stopping again?"

"No, Monsieur, it's Cocotte. She won't go on; I whip her, but it makes no difference."

"You've given her too much to eat."

"Oh, no. Gee up, you idle hussy!"

Grilloie had not the least suspicion that some one had got up behind the carriage. From his seat he could not see over the vehicle, and as there was no window in the back, the new traveller was perfectly safe. Unfortunately, a passer-by said to Grilloie, "Whip behind, my good man."

"Ah, yes! some one must have got up behind. No wonder Cocotte finds such difficulty in getting along."

"You must ask the person to get down," said Baisemon.

"I'll ask him with blows from my whip."

"A bad method. Gentleness goes farther than violence."

Grilloie tried to reach the back of the carriage with his whip, but without success.

"Leave off, do, Grilloie," said Virginie. "It's a poor child, a little Savoyard, who got up for a few minutes' rest. I forbid you to beat him, poor little fellow."

"But, mamzelle—Cocotte——"

"Cocotte 'll get over it. She's strong enough to bear us all. Whip her well, but if you whip behind you shall have nothing more to eat."

Just then the sound of hoofs became audible. Virginie thrust out her head, a rider advanced. It was a young man; he came nearer; she recognised him. It was Doudoux, on a fine English horse.

"Good! there's the other," said the girl to herself. "Oh! it'll be still more amusing!"

Godibert leaned over to Virginie, and asked, "Who is the fellow trotting alongside of the carriage? He does nothing but look in. Do you know him, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes; he's a young man from Belleville."

"Ah, then he's following you."

"I can't say; isn't the high road free to all?"

"Yes; but I object to his looking at you so often. If he doesn't leave off, I'll pull his horse's tail for him."

"How spiteful you are, Monsieur Godibert!"

"No, Mademoiselle, I'm as meek as milk; but that young man sits very badly, and I should like to give him a lesson in riding."

At length the two men were discovered, and Grilloie took them for robbers. He whipped up his horse, the carriage gave a lurch forward, Grilloie fell under Cocotte's tail, and M. Baisemon on top of Grilloie. Virginie kept her seat unharmed. The damage was set right, and the two lovers then demanded an explanation.

"What do you mean by keeping near the carriage, and never taking your eyes off the lady?" asked Godibert, in a tone of command.

"I do what I like; it's none of your business."

"I desire you not to follow the carriage."

"And what right have you to prevent me?"

"What right? Why, that of the first-comer."

And Godibert hit out at Doudoux, who furiously returned the blow.

"Monsieur, our robbers are fighting each other," said Grilloie; "doubtless about which is to have possession of our goods."

"Grilloie, take advantage of the circumstance, and drive on quickly."

Paul de Kock (1794-1871).

THE GRISETTE'S STORY.

"YOU must know," said Mimi Pinson, "that last week Blanchette, Rougette, and myself went to the Odéon Theatre to see a tragedy. As you are aware, Rougette has just lost her grandmother, who left her four hundred francs. We took a box. Three students in the stalls observed us, and, under pretext that we were alone, invited us to supper."

"What! point-blank?" inquired Marcel. "Upon my word, it was very polite of them; of course you refused."

"No," said Mdlle. Pinson, "we accepted, and instead of waiting for the end of the piece, we betook ourselves to Viot's."

"With your cavaliers?"

"With our cavaliers. Of course the waiter began by informing us that everything was off, but we were not likely to let a *contretemps* like that spoil sport. We told them to search the whole city for what we required. Rougette took a pen and ordered a regular wedding feast—shrimps, a sweet omelette, fritters, egg-snow, and all the good cheer possible. To speak the truth, the young men looked rather put out——"

"I can well believe it," said Marcel.

"But we took no notice. When the food came we acted the fine lady. Nothing was fit to eat; we turned from everything in disgust. As soon as a dish appeared we sent it away and demanded another. 'Waiter, take that away; it's not eatable. Wherever did you get such horrid stuff?' Our companions wanted to eat, but we did not give them time. In short, we supped as Sancho dined, and in our annoyance we even broke some of the plates and dishes."

"Nice behaviour, indeed! And how did you settle the bill?"

"That is precisely the question the three strangers asked themselves. Judging from their whispered conversation, one of them seemed to possess six francs, the other infinitely less, and the third had nothing but his watch, which he generously took out of his pocket. In that condition the poor wretches presented themselves at the desk, hoping to obtain some sort of respite. What do you think the result was?"

"I suppose," replied Marcel, "that you were retained as hostages, and the others sent to the lock-up."

"You are wrong," said Mdlle. Pinson. "Before going up to our private room Rougette had arranged matters, and

everything had been paid for in advance. Imagine how astonished the students were when Viot said: 'Gentlemen, the bill is paid.'"

Alfred de Musset (1810-1857).

TO FANNY.

AFTER your mother's last "good-night,"
And her last kiss upon the stair,
And when beneath the flickering light
You bow your giddy head in prayer;

When all is silent in the town,
And every thought of care has fled,
When you let your tresses down,
And peer in fright beneath your bed;

When teeming brains have ceased to whirl,
And e'en maternal eyes are winking,
I wonder, Fan, my darling girl,
I wonder what on earth you're thinking!

Who knows? perhaps of wond'rous bonnets,
Just suited to your fancy head,
Of novels, cookery books, and sonnets,
Of torments and your brother Ted.

Perhaps of the mountains over there,
Whose rugged brows are strangely steeped,
And perhaps of "Castles in the Air,"
With lovers and with bon-bons peopled.

Perhaps of the thrilling real romance
 That Annie whisper'd over tea,
 Perhaps of your last new song or dance,
 Of nothing perhaps—and perhaps of *me*.

Alfred de Musset.

THE KING OF YVETOT.

THERE flourished once a potentate,
 Whom history doesn't name ;
 He rose at ten, retired at eight,
 And snored unknown to fame !
 A night-cap for his crown he wore,
 A common cotton thing,
 Which Jeannette to his bedside bore,
 This jolly little king !
 Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Ha, ha, ha, ha !
 This jolly little king !

With four diurnal banquets he
 His appetite allayed,
 And on a jackass leisurely
 His royal progress made.
 No cumbrous state his steps would clog,
 Fear to the winds he'd fling !
 His single escort was a dog,
 This jolly little king !
 Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Ha, ha, ha, ha !
 This jolly little king !

He owned to only one excess,—
 He doted on his glass,—
 But when a king gives happiness,
 Why that, you see, will pass !

On every bottle, small or great,
For which he used to ring,
He laid a tax inordinate,
This jolly little king !
Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Ha, ha, ha, ha !
This jolly little king !

Such crowds of pretty girls he found
Occasion to admire,
It gave his subjects double ground
For greeting him as Sire !
To shoot for cocoa-nuts he manned
His army every spring,
But all conscription sternly banned
This jolly little king !
Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Ha, ha, ha, ha !
This jolly little king !

He eyed no neighbouring domain
With envy or with greed,
And, like a pattern sovereign,
Took pleasure for his creed !
Yet, 'twas not, if aright I ween,
Until his life took wing,
His subjects saw that he had been
A jolly little king !
Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Ha, ha, ha, ha !
This jolly little king !

This worthy monarch, readers mine,
You even now may see,
Embellishing a tavern-sign
Well known to you and me !

There, when the fête-day bottle flows,
 Their bumpers they will bring,
 And toast beneath his very nose
 This jolly little king !
 Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Ha, ha, ha, ha !
 This jolly little king !

Béranger (1780-1857).

THE GARRET.

YES, here's the old room where I roughed it so long
 In the penniless days I ne'er cease to regret,
 When a scapegrace of twenty I lived but for song,
 A few cheery friends, and the charms of Lisette !
 In the pride of Life's spring-tide, ne'er taking account
 Of the world and its ways, or what Fate had in store,
 How gaily up six flights of stairs would I mount !
 Ah, give me my youth and a garret once more !

A garret ! the fact I am proud to confess !
 Over there stood the pallet which served as a bed,
 Here tottered my table, and can it be ? yes,
 On the wall a rude stanza is still to be read !
 Dear simple delights of Life's rose-tinted dawn,
 Too soon by Time's tyranny doomed to be o'er,
 How often my watch for your sake would I pawn !—
 Ah, give me my youth and a garret once more !

See, here comes Lisette tripping airily in,
 A flower in her bonnet coquettishly twined,
 How pretty she looks standing tiptoe to pin
 Her shawl o'er the window in place of a blind !
 Thanks, too, to the skirt she slips laughingly down,
 The lack of a quilt we've no need to deplore ;
 (I didn't know then who had paid for the gown !)
 Ah, give me my youth and a garret once more !

Then that carnival night, when beginning to troll
 Some boisterous carol of folly and fun,
 We heard the far boom of artillery roll—
 Napoleon had vanquished ; Marengo was won !
 How it broke into triumph our bacchanal song,
 Mighty France our one theme, and the Laurels she wore!
 Where were now all the kings who had braved her so long?
 Ah, give me my youth and a garret once more !

Farewell, beloved scenes of a long-vanished past,
 Whose every bright moment 'tis bliss to recall !
 Were my years ev'n a century longer to last,
 For one hour of those days I would barter them all !
 Magic era of Glory and Love and Delight,
 When the whole of Life's wine at one banquet we pour,
 And the Iris of hope seems for ever in sight !—
 Ah, give me my youth and a garret once more !

Béranger.

MY COAT.

MY humble friend, forsake me not !
 We both are ageing by degrees ;
 I've brushed you ten long years, a lot
 Worthy of even Socrates !
 When upon evil days you fall,
 And holes in dire profusion start,
 Like me, be sternly Stoical !
 My dear old coat, we'll never part !

Well can I recollect the day
 When Destiny first made you mine,
 Comrades were gathered round me gay,
 To keep my fête with song and wine ;

Your poverty—'twas, too, my pride—
Has caused me not a single smart ;
Those friends still rally to my side ;
My dear old coat, we'll never part !

You boast a darn, which to the last
I lovingly shall call to mind ;
One night, from Rose retreating fast,
I felt a sudden snatch behind !
We tussled, you were torn in two ;
It cost her dear that desperate dart,
She took a week to tinker you !
My dear old coat, we'll never part !

By perfumes you were ne'er defiled
Such as infest a coxcomb's glass,
Into no anteroom beguiled
Where courtiers sycophantic pass ;
When France to Stars resigned her soul,
For Ribands made an open mart,
A daisy decked your button-hole !—
My dear old coat, we'll never part !

Ah, well, we've little more to fear,
Our chequered course will soon be run,
There'll soon be truce to smile and tear,
To shadow interspersed with sun !
For the last garb of all, good friend,
I must prepare to nerve my heart ;
No matter ! we'll together end,
My dear old coat, we'll never part !

Béranger.

ROSETTE.

WHAT ! all oblivious of your youth,
On me your myriad spells you'd ply,
Who, to confess the fatal truth,
Have seen full forty summers fly !
On me, whose one flame hitherto
Has been a cotton-gowned coquette !
Ah, if I only could love you
As once I used to love Rosette !

Your carriage whirls you every day
In satins—who can guess their worth ?
Rosette with just a riband gay
Skimmed laughingly her mother-earth,
While right and left her glances flew
To keep me in a constant pet !
Ah, if I only could love you
As once I used to love Rosette !

As down your velvet pile you pass,
Grand mirrors greet you everywhere ;
Rosette had but one looking-glass,
The Graces must have put it there !
No damask round her bed she drew,
Her sleep the sun could never fret !
Ah, if I only could love you
As once I used to love Rosette !

You've earned, thanks to your pretty wit,
More than one poetaster's meed ;
Well, I'll unblushingly admit,
Rosette knew scarcely how to read,

But Cupid always pulled her through,
If in a fix she chanced to get.
Ah, if I only could love you
As once I used to love Rosette !

In looks she came behind you far,
Nor indeed had she half your heart ;
Those eyes of yours much gentler are
When a poor lover lisps his part !
But Youth, bright Youth, a glamour threw
Over her charms which glimmers yet—
Ah no, I never can love you
As once I used to love Rosette.

Béranger.

TAMANGO.

CAPTAIN LEDOUX was a good seaman. He had commenced a simple sailor, then he became assistant steersman. At the battle of Trafalgar his left hand was shattered by a splinter ; it was amputated, and he was afterwards dismissed with good certificates. But idleness did not suit him, and an opportunity of returning to sea presenting itself, he took service as second lieutenant on board a corsair. The prize-money he thus gained enabled him to buy books and to study the theory of navigation, with the practice of which he was already perfectly acquainted. In time he became captain of a corsair lugger with three guns and a crew of sixty men, and the Jersey coasters still remember his exploits. Peace made him miserable. During the war he had amassed a small fortune, which he hoped to increase at the expense of the English. He was obliged to offer his services to peace-loving merchants, and as he had the reputation of a man of determination and

experience, he was soon entrusted with a ship. When the slave-trade was abolished, and to carry it on it was necessary not only to deceive the vigilance of the French customs officers—no very difficult matter—but also, and that was by far the greater danger, to dodge the English cruisers, Captain Ledoux became a valuable man to traffickers in ebony.¹

Different from most sailors, who, like him, had lingered out their time in subaltern positions, he had no horror of innovations, and was not entirely eaten up with that love of routine they too often carry into superior stations. But what gave him the greatest honour among the slave merchants was the building, which he superintended himself, of a brig destined for the trade, a beautiful sailing boat, narrow, long, like a man-of-war, and yet capable of holding a very large number of blacks. He named it the *Esperance*. He ordered the between-decks to be only three feet four high, declaring that that measurement would allow slaves of a moderate stature to sit down comfortably; and what need is there for them to get up? “Once in the colonies,” said Ledoux, “they’ll only be too much on their feet.”

The negroes, their backs leaning against the planking of the ship, and arranged in two parallel lines, left between their feet an empty space, which in all the other slave ships was only used as a passage. It occurred to Ledoux to place other negroes in the space, laid perpendicularly to the first, so that his ship held about ten negroes more than any other of the same tonnage. Under strong necessity even more could be put into it, but humanity must not be forgotten, and a negro must be allowed at least five feet by two to take his ease in during a voyage of six weeks or more. “For,” said Ledoux to his employer, in order to justify such

¹ Name which the persons carrying on the slave-trade give themselves.

liberality, "negroes, after all, are men as much as the whites."

The *Esperance* set out from Nantes one Friday, as superstitious persons have since remarked. The inspectors who scrupulously examined the brig did not discover six big cases filled with chains, handcuffs, and the irons called, I don't know why, *barres de justice*. Neither were they surprised at the enormous quantity of water carried by the *Esperance*, who, according to her papers, was only going to Senegal to trade in wood and ivory. The passage was not long, it is true, but extra precaution can do no harm. If they were overtaken by a calm, what would become of them without water?

. . . The voyage to the coast of Africa was fortunate and rapid. The ship anchored in the river Joale (I think) at a moment when the English cruisers were not watching that part of the coast. The native brokers immediately came aboard. The moment could not have been better chosen. Tamango, a celebrated warrior and seller of men, had just brought a large quantity of slaves down to the coast, and he would dispose of them cheaply, like a man who felt in himself the power and means to supply the void promptly as soon as the material of his trade became rare.

Captain Ledoux had himself set ashore, and paid Tamango a visit. He found him in a hastily-erected straw cabin, accompanied by his two wives, and a few under-merchants and slave-drivers. Tamango was attired to receive the white captain. He was clothed in an old blue uniform coat, having still its corporal's stripes; but from each shoulder hung two gold epaulettes fastened to the same button, and tossing about, one in front, the other behind. As he had no shirt, and the coat was rather short for a man of his inches, a large band of black skin, resembling a girdle, made its appearance between the white

facing of the coat and his drawers of Guinea linen. A big cavalry sabre was hung round his neck by a string, and in his hand he held a fine double-barrelled gun of English make. Thus attired, the African warrior believed himself more elegant than the most perfect Parisian or London man of fashion.

Captain Ledoux observed him for some time in silence, while Tamango, drawing himself up like a grenadier being reviewed by a foreign general, thoroughly enjoyed the impression he thought he was making on the white man. Ledoux, after examining him with the eye of a connoisseur, turned to his second officer, and said: "That's a fellow I could sell for a thousand crowns at least, landed uninjured and undamaged at Martinique."

They sat down, and a sailor, who knew a little of the Yolofo language, acted as interpreter. The first polite compliments exchanged, a cabin-boy brought a hamper of brandy; they drank, and to put Tamango into a good temper the captain presented him with a copper powder-flask adorned with a portrait of Napoleon in relief. The gift accepted with becoming gratitude, they came out of the cabin, and sat in the shade opposite the brandy-bottles. Tamango gave orders for the slaves he had to sell to be exhibited.

. . . As each slave, male or female, passed before him, the captain shrugged his shoulders, found the men sickly, the women too old or too young, and complained of the deterioration of the negro race. "Everything is degenerating," he said. "Formerly things were very different. The women were five feet six, and four men by themselves could turn the capstan of a frigate in order to weigh the sheet-anchor."

However, while criticising, he made a first selection of the strongest and finest blacks. For those he would pay the ordinary price; but for the others he demanded a large

reduction. Tamango, on his part, looked carefully after his own interests, boasted of his merchandise, spoke of the scarcity of the men, and the dangers of the trade. He concluded by naming a sum, I do not know what, for the slaves with whom the white captain desired to load his vessel.

As soon as the interpreter had translated Tamango's proposition into French, Ledoux almost fell over from surprise and indignation. Then, muttering horrible oaths, he got up as if to break off all treaty with such an unreasonable man. But Tamango laid hold of him, and with some difficulty succeeded in forcing him to sit down again. A fresh bottle was uncorked, and the discussion began again. It was now the black man's turn to find the white's proposals senseless and extravagant. For a long time they shouted, disputed, and drank a prodigious quantity of brandy; but the brandy produced a very different effect on the two contracting parties. The more the Frenchman drank the more he reduced his offers; the more the African drank, the more he gave up his claims. So that by the time the hamper was finished they were both agreed. Some poor cotton stuffs, powder, flints, three barrels of brandy, and fifty ill-adjusted muskets were given in exchange for a hundred and sixty slaves. To ratify the treaty, the captain shook the hand of the more than half-drunk negro, and the slaves were immediately handed over to the French sailors, who quickly replaced their wooden forks¹ by iron collars and handcuffs—a circumstance that clearly proves the superiority of European civilisation.

There still remained about thirty slaves—children, old men, weakly women. The ship was full.

Tamango, not knowing what to do with this refuse, offered them to the captain for a bottle of brandy a-piece.

¹ Each slave's neck was encased in a pitchfork more than six feet long, and the two points were joined by a bar of wood.

It was an attractive offer. Ledoux remembered that at a representation of the *Sicilian Vespers* at Nantes he had seen a large number of big fat persons enter the pit, full as it was, and, thanks to the compressibility of the human body, even succeed in sitting down. He took twenty of the thinnest from the thirty slaves.

Then Tamango only asked a glass of brandy for each of the ten remaining. Ledoux remembered that children only pay for and occupy half a place in the public conveyances. He took three children, and then declared he would not have a single negro more. Tamango, perceiving that seven slaves would still remain on his hands, seized his gun and aimed it at the woman who came first. She was the mother of the three children. "Buy her," he said to the white man, "or I kill her; a glass of brandy, or I shoot."

"And what the devil do you expect me to do with her?" replied Ledoux.

Tamango fired, and the slave fell dead on the ground.

"Come, another!" shouted Tamango, aiming at a broken-down old man. "A glass of brandy, or——"

One of his wives caught hold of his arm, and the shot flew wide. She had recognised in the man her husband was about to kill a *guiriot* or magician, who had foretold that she would be queen.

Tamango, maddened with brandy, seeing his will opposed, lost all control over himself. He struck his wife roughly with the butt-end of his gun, and, turning to Ledoux, "Here," he said, "I give you this woman."

She was pretty. Ledoux looked at her smilingly and took her by the hand. "I shall find somewhere to put her," he said.

The captain bade Tamango farewell, and busied himself with embarking his cargo as quickly as possible. It was imprudent to remain any longer in the river; the cruisers

might reappear, and he wished to set sail to-morrow. As for Tamango, he lay down on the grass in the shade to sleep himself sober.

When he awoke the ship was already under sail, and going down the river. Tamango (his brain still confused by yesterday's debauch) asked for his wife Ayché. They told him that she had unfortunately displeased him, and that he had given her as a present to the white captain, who had taken her on board his ship. Stupefied by the news, Tamango struck his head, then took his gun, and as the river made many detours before falling into the sea, he ran by the most direct road to a little creek about a mile and a half from the mouth. There he hoped to find a canoe in which he could reach the brig, whose progress would be retarded by the windings of the river. He was not mistaken: in fact, he had time to throw himself into the canoe and come up with the slave-ship.

Ledoux was surprised to see him, but still more to hear him ask for his wife back again. "Goods given are not restored," he replied.

And he turned his back.

The negro insisted, offering to give back some of the articles he had received in exchange for the slaves. The captain began to laugh, said Ayché was a very good woman, and he wanted to keep her. Then poor Tamango burst into a torrent of tears, and uttered cries of pain as heart-rending as those of a poor wretch undergoing some surgical operation. Ever unruffled, the captain, pointing to the banks, signed to him that it was time to go; but Tamango persisted. He even offered his gold epaulettes, his gun, and his sabre. All was vain.

During the dispute the lieutenant of the *Esperance* said to the captain: "Three of our slaves died last night; we have room—why not take this strong rascal, who by himself is worth the three dead ones?" Ledoux reflected

that Tamango would sell for full a thousand crowns; that the voyage, which promised to be very profitable, would probably be his last; that, having made his fortune, he should give up trading in slaves, and thus it did not greatly matter whether the reputation he left behind him on the coast of Guinea was good or bad. Besides, the banks were deserted, and the African warrior entirely at his mercy. It only remained to deprive him of his arms; for it would have been dangerous to lay a hand on him while they were still in his possession. Ledoux then asked for his gun as if to examine it, and assure himself that it was worth as much as the beautiful Ayché. In putting the springs in motion, he took care to let the powder with which it was primed fall out. The lieutenant on his part got possession of the sabre, and Tamango, thus disarmed, was set upon by two vigorous sailors and thrown on his back. They attempted to bind him. The negro's resistance was heroic. But at last they succeeded in binding fast his feet and hands. "By Jove," cried Captain Ledoux, "the blacks whom he sold will laugh heartily when they see him in his turn a slave. They'll now perceive that there is a Providence."

Favoured by a good land wind, the vessel rapidly left the African coast behind her. Free from anxiety about the English cruisers, the captain thought of nothing but the enormous gains awaiting him in the colonies, towards which he was directing his course. His ebony was undamaged. No contagious diseases. Only twelve negroes, and those the weakest, died of the heat. That was a mere trifle. In order that his human cargo might suffer as little as possible from the fatigues of the voyage, he was careful to have his slaves brought on deck every day. Exercise is necessary to health; thus one of Captain Ledoux's practices was to make his slaves dance, as you see prance during a long voyage. "There, my

children, dance ; amuse yourselves," said the captain in a voice of thunder, cracking an enormous whip.

And immediately the poor blacks leaped and danced.

At length Tamango appeared on deck. And, first proudly lifting up his head in the midst of the cowed slaves, he looked sadly but calmly at the immense watery plain surrounding the ship. Then he lay down, or rather let himself fall on the planks of the deck, without even taking the trouble to arrange his irons comfortably. Ledoux, seated on the quarter-deck, was quietly smoking his pipe. Near him Ayché, without irons, dressed in an elegant gown of blue cotton, her feet shod in pretty morocco shoes, was holding a tray ready to pour out wine or brandy for him. It was evident that she fulfilled high functions in the captain's service. A negro, who hated Tamango, signed to him to look round. Tamango turned his head, saw her, and uttered a cry. Rising quickly, he ran towards the quarter-deck before the sailors could prevent so terrible an infraction of naval discipline :—"Ayché !" he cried in a thundering voice, and Ayché uttered a cry of terror, "do you suppose that there's no MAMA-JUMBO in the country of the whites ?" Tamango, his arms crossed, and seemingly unmoved, quietly returned to his place, while Ayché, bursting into tears, appeared as if petrified by those mysterious words.

The interpreter explained who this Mama-Jumbo, whose name alone could produce such horror, was. "It's the negro's Bogie," he said. "When a husband has cause to think that his wife is conducting herself in a way as common in France as in Africa, he threatens her with Mama-Jumbo. I have seen Mama-Jumbo, and understand the trick ; but the blacks, as is quite natural, do not understand it in the least. But with it all, Mama-Jumbo's a fine invention, and I wish my wife believed in it."

"As for mine," said Ledoux, "if she doesn't fear Mama-

Jumbo, she fears the cudgel, and she knows what I should do if she played tricks with me. The Ledoux family is not patient, and although I've only one fist, it knows how to wield the 'cat-o'-nine-tails.' ”

Tamango exhorted the slaves to make an effort for their liberty. With his aid they rebelled and murdered all the white men. But none of the negroes understood how to navigate the ship, which, buffeted by the winds and waves, lost its two masts. The negroes discovered with joy the place where the brandy was kept, and entered on a period of brutal drunkenness. A brilliant idea struck them. They knew how to row; they took to the boats. All perished except Tamango.

I do not know how long afterwards an English frigate, the *Bellona*, sighted a dismasted vessel, apparently abandoned by her crew. When the long-boat reached her, the men found a dead negress, and a negro so lean and emaciated, that he resembled a mummy. He was unconscious, but still alive. The surgeon took charge of him, and tended him so carefully, that when the *Bellona* reached Kingston Tamango was in excellent health. They asked for his story. He told them what he knew. The planters wanted to hang him for a negro rebel. But the governor, a kind-hearted man, was interested in him, and since, after all, he had only used the legitimate right of defence, found his cause justifiable; and those he had killed were only Frenchmen. He was given his freedom—that is to say, he was put to work for the government; but he had six sous a day and his food. He was a very handsome man. The colonel of the 75th saw him, and made him a drummer in the regimental band. He learned a little English, but he scarcely ever spoke. On the other hand, he drank rum to excess. He died in the hospital of inflammation of the lungs.

Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870).

AN EXPLANATION AVOIDED.

(FROM "LA CANNE DE M. DE BALZAC."¹)

[*Tancredi, always invisible, accompanies M. —, the Minister, to the Tuileries.*]

A FEW minutes later the king sat down at the table, and each of the ministers took his place at the council board.

Tancredi was vastly embarrassed, torn between the desire of listening to all that was going to be said, and the shame of committing an unworthy act.

At length he made terms with his conscience.

"Spying," he said to himself, "consists in repeating, not in knowing."

And he prepared to listen.

Unluckily while walking about the minister's palace he had felt a chill, which brought out a bad cold in the head he had been trying to keep off for a week, and which seemed for the moment to have forgotten him. It was one of those horrible colds that cause a scandal at the theatre or at the Academy; one of those obstinate attacks that in early youth are called colds in the head, but that in later life are respectfully designated by the more imposing name of catarrhs.

At first Tancredi struggled with the hostile cold. He choked and suffocated. Soon the combat became impossible; he coughed out, he coughed out boldly, and abandoned himself to all the fury of the attack.

The king was busy reading,—he was looking over a document one of the ministers had just delivered him. He did not lift his eyes, but he heard the terrible cough,

¹ This cane had the magic power of rendering invisible any one who held it in the left hand.

and thought it belonged to one of his ministers. Thinking that a soldier, worn out by many campaigns, was more likely to be the owner of it than the younger ministers, he said kindly to the war minister, "Marshal, you have a very bad cold."

The marshal had no cold whatever; but too well bred to contradict his sovereign or to pass over a mark of interest that would rouse the envy of the others, bowing respectfully, he replied: "Yes, sire, a very bad cold; the other day at the review——" And he began to cough enthusiastically.

Tancredè was saved.

Flattery gave probability to a fantastic cold that might have astonished the king.

He coughed in concert with the marshal, who ended by surpassing him. The cough of the latter, pretended at first, became real. That sort of trick is easy at his age. In fact, he acquitted himself so well that Tancredè was sorely tempted to say to him: "Thank you, my good fellow, that's enough,—you need not trouble yourself any more."

Madame de Girardin (1805-1855).

HOW THE GOOD NEWS WAS BROUGHT TO GEORGE SAND.

GEORGE SAND'S play, *François le Champi*, had been produced in Paris with complete success. George Sand was far away at her country-house at Nohant. The actors and their friends wondered how the good news could be conveyed to George Sand. There was no telegraph, and it was too late to post a letter. Paul Bocage, nephew of the great actor, offered to convey the news himself.

"How will you get there?" said his uncle. "By rail. There must be some night train to Château-Roux."

"I believe," said a voice, "there is one at about four in the morning."

"I must start at once, then," said Paul. "Have you any money, uncle?"

The uncle emptied his pockets, and produced 103 francs, armed with which Paul set out.

It was impossible to get a cab; the pavement was covered with frozen rain, and heavy snow was falling. Paul had nothing to protect him against the weather but a light overcoat. He ran, slipping constantly, to the Orleans Station.

There was just such a sharp breeze as made Hamlet say, "The air bites shrewdly," but Hamlet had a cloak to keep him warm, and a friend to console him. Paul had neither. He arrived bitterly cold at the station at four o'clock. There was no sign of a train. He knocked furiously at a little tavern door. The tavern-keeper came down grumbling, and asked what he wanted. Paul reflected that if he asked what he really wanted to know—when there was a train—and called for what he really wanted to have, a fire to warm himself, the tavern-keeper would grumble still more. He asked then for an omelette and a glass of rum. He calculated that to make an omelette it was necessary to light a fire, and that while the omelette was being made he could ask about the trains. There was no train till six, so he had plenty of time to warm himself. He had just had supper, and had no intention of eating his omelette; but he was very cold, and had every intention of drinking his rum. The tavern-keeper thought he had asked for an *omelette au rhum*, and presented him accordingly with an omelette swimming in blazing spirit—a sort of Delos floating on the sea of flame. This was not what Bocage wanted at all. He called for his glass of rum. It was not to be had. All the rum in the house had been devoted to his omelette. He emptied the blazing spirit into a glass, and swallowed it straight off, thinking that the

hotter it was the better it would warm him. In five minutes he was so warm that he walked about mopping his forehead. But for economy's sake he was obliged to travel third-class, and was very soon frozen again. A nurse whom he met in the carriage gave him half of her flask full of brandy. At six o'clock he arrived shivering again at Château-Roux. It was colder than ever, and he had eight leagues to go to Nohant. With infinite difficulty, having got hold of a friend of his who lived in Château-Roux, he procured a kind of country vehicle to take him. He had no time to make a regular meal, so he devoured some bread, and asked his friend what kind of thing he had better drink.

"A glass of rum," said the friend.

"I swallowed a plateful this morning."

"A glass of brandy, then."

"I drank half a flask in the train."

"A glass of kirsch, then."

"Not a bad idea," said Paul, and drank his kirsch and started.

They had a horrible journey—once he had to drag his driver and the horse out of a snowdrift, and they did not get to George Sand's house till three in the morning. The house was shut up and dark. The driver cursed, a dog barked, and Paul rang the bell furiously. Amid this Babel of noises a light at length appeared. Paul wanted to let go the bell; but the bell did not want to let go Paul. His hand was frozen to it, and he had to sacrifice some of his skin.

An old woman appeared at the gate and said, "Who are you?"

"A friend of Madame Sand."

"Where do you come from?"

"Paris."

"You think we shall wake up Madame at this time of night?"

"I don't want you to."

"What do you want, then?"

"I want you to open the gate."

"And supposing I do open it?"

"Then you will take me to a room, the horse to the stable, and the driver to the kitchen."

"You think that is how things will be done?"

"That is how I should like them to be done."

"Well, wait here, and I'll send some one to talk to you."

She went away, and in ten minutes came back with a strong man and a bludgeon. The man kept guard over Paul while the horse and cart went in, and then led the way to the house. Paul was so cold that if a sword had been thrust through his body it would have come out colder than it went in. The man took him to an anteroom lighted by a candle standing on the ground. "Stay here," said the man.

"You are going to tell Maurice that I am here, I suppose," said Paul.

"I am going," said the man threateningly, "to send *some one* who will talk to you."

Paul knelt down and tried to warm himself at the candle. While he was doing this he heard footsteps—looked up—and saw the devil, in his traditional costume of red and black. He began to wonder what had befallen him.

"What do you want?" said the devil.

"To see Madame Sand."

"I am not Madame Sand."

"So I see," said Paul.

"What do you want with Madame Sand?"

"To give her a message."

"What is it?"

"I will tell her to-morrow."

"If," said the devil, "you are in no greater hurry than

that, you need hardly have come here at three o'clock in the morning."

"I am in a hurry, but what I have to say to Madame Sand regards herself alone. You I do not know."

"Nor I you," said the devil, and turning on his heel disappeared.

Paul wondered whether the rum, the brandy, and the kirsch had made him drunk. No—he felt perfectly sober, and could only suppose that his driver, instead of taking him to Madame Sand's, had taken him to quite a different place.

The man with the bludgeon now came back, and said to Paul, "Follow me."

He then led him into an extraordinary room, about twenty-five feet long and four feet wide. On one side of it were an immense looking-glass and a vast number of candles. The other was hung with tapestry. Paul knew that there was no such room in Madame Sand's house. However, all he could do was to make the best of things. He caught sight of himself in the glass, and found his moustache and beard a mass of icicles. While he was trying to disentangle them, the tapestry suddenly disappeared, and he saw reflected in the glass a charming landscape, with a summer-house occupied by various persons in mediæval costume—among them the devil whom he had just seen, and a student draped in black. The student advanced, and cried, "Ha! Señor Pablo! is it thou?"

"Ah!" cried Paul, "it's Madame Sand."

Then, in spite of his bewilderment, he began to tell her **his news**, but she stopped him by saying, "No—no—I'll hear all that **afterwards**. **At present you are greatly wanted here.**"

"How so?"

"We have no alcade."

"No alcade?"

"Isabella's father. Without a father to give his consent there can be no fifth act. Go and dress at once; and remember that your daughter has run away with a young student—you pursue them—you catch them, and are at the point of killing the student, when Mascarille so touches your heart by his prayers that you relent."

"But I wanted to tell you——"

"Make haste—go and dress—catch the fugitives first—pardon them afterwards—and then, if you like, tell me your news."

"But what in heaven's name are you doing?"

"Acting a play."

"Without an audience?"

"Of course—we act for ourselves."

"But you can't see yourselves?"

"Yes we can—in the looking-glass."

"Oh! I see," said Paul, who was immediately hurried off to the wardrobe, and given his choice of costumes. He was still shivering, and he put on a Polish dress with heavy furs.

"What are you doing?" said one of the company; "you mustn't wear a Polish dress."

"Oh, yes," said Paul, "it's quite simple. The fugitives have fled to Poland, and, so as to be unobserved, I have assumed the dress of the country. It makes the situation more natural." Paul pursued and pardoned his fugitives, and tried again to give George Sand his news, but was again stopped, and it was not until they were at supper that she said, "Now for your news, Paul!"

He replied by raising his glass and saying, "To the hundredth night of *François le Champi*, which was produced yesterday with immense success!"

Alexandre Dumas (1803–1870).

DEATH AND THE SPIRIT OF COMMERCE.

(FROM "COUSIN PONS.")

AT nine o'clock Madame Sauvage contrived to get Schmucke downstairs, by supporting him under the armpits ; but when he had taken his seat in the hackney coach he was obliged to beg Rémonencq to go with him to the *Mairie* to register the death of Pons.

Arrived there, Schmucke found himself in the midst of a wedding party ; nor was this all ; he was obliged to wait till his turn came ; for, by one of those coincidences that so often happen in Paris, the clerk had five or six deaths to register. During this interval the poor German must have undergone an agony scarcely less intense than that of the Saviour of mankind.

"Are you Monsieur Schmucke?" inquired a man dressed in black, addressing himself to the German, who was astonished at the mention of his own name. Schmucke stared at the person who thus accosted him with the dazed expression with which he had encountered the remarks of Rémonencq.

"What do you want with him?" said the broker to the stranger. "Can't you leave the man alone? Don't you see that he is in trouble?"

"You have just lost your friend, Monsieur, and you would like to raise a fitting monument to his memory ; for you are his heir," said the stranger. "I am sure Monsieur would not like to act shabbily ; Monsieur will no doubt purchase a plot of ground in perpetuity for a grave. Then Monsieur Pons was such a friend to the Arts ! It would be a great pity not to place upon his tomb Music, Painting, and Sculpture—three beautiful figures at the foot of the grave bathed in tears——"

Rémonencq here indulged in a repellent gesture, worthy of a son of Auvergne, to which the man responded by another gesture, which might be called a commercial gesture, and said as plainly as words could have said: "Can't you let me transact my business?"

The broker perfectly understood it.

"I am agent to the house of Sonet & Co., funeral monument contractors," pursued the tout, whom Walter Scott would have nick-named "*Young Mortality*." "If Monsieur should think fit to entrust us with the order, we would save him the trouble of going into the city to purchase the ground needed for the interment of the friend whom the Arts have lost——"

Rémonencq nodded his head by way of expressing his assent, and nudged Schmucke's elbow.

"It happens to us every day to undertake, on behalf of families, the due execution of all formalities," pursued the tout, encouraged by the Auvergnat's gesture. "In the first moment of sorrow it is very difficult for an heir to attend in person to these details, and we are accustomed to perform these little services for our clients. Our monuments, Monsieur, are charged for at so much per foot, either in freestone or marble. We open the ground for family graves. We undertake everything at the most reasonable prices. We employ the very best workmen; and," added he (as he saw another man, dressed in black, approaching with the view of putting in a word for some other firm in the marble and sculpture line), "I invite Monsieur to be on his guard against the small contractors, who turn out nothing but trumpery."

"I am doing business with this gentleman," said the tout of the firm of Sonet & Co. to the supervening tout.

"Pons deceased! Where are the witnesses?" sang out the attendant at the registry.

"Come, Monsieur," said the tout, addressing Rémonencq

Rémonencq begged the man to raise Schmucke, who remained seated on the bench, like a mass of inanimate matter. The two men led him to the railing behind which the Registrar shelters himself from the public grief. Rémonencq — Schmucke's temporary Providence — was assisted in his task by Doctor Poulain, who had presented himself for the purpose of supplying the necessary information as to Pons's age and place of birth. The German knew one fact, and only one—Pons had been his friend!

“Now, my dear client,” said Messrs. Sonet's tout, “do just take a little broth; you have so many things to do, you know; you have to go to the Hôtel de Ville to buy the ground on which you are about to erect a monument in commemoration of this friend of the Arts, and in token of your gratitude. . . . Since Monsieur intends to erect a magnificent monument to the memory of his friend, all he need do is to authorise me to take the necessary steps; I will do——”

“What is all this about? What is all this about?” interrupted Dame Sauvage. “Monsieur has given you an order. Who are *you*, pray?”

“One of the agents of the firm of Sonet & Co., my good lady, the largest contractors for funeral monuments in Paris,” said the tout, taking from his pocket a card, which he presented to Dame Sauvage.

“Well! well! all right! all right! we will send to you when it is convenient; but you mustn't take advantage of this gentleman's condition. You can clearly see that he is not in full possession of his senses——”

“If you can manage to secure us the order,” whispered Messrs. Sonet's tout to Madame Sauvage as he led her out on the landing, “I am authorised to offer you forty francs.”

“Well, give me your address,” said the mollified woman.

Schmucke, finding himself alone, and feeling all the better for the bread and soup which he had at least swallowed, even if he had not digested it, hurried back to Pons's room, and resumed his prayers. He was plunged into the profoundest abysses of sorrow, when he was recalled from his state of utter self-forgetfulness by a young man clad in black, who was saying to him for the eleventh time, "Sir," an interpellation which the more readily attracted the attention of the old man, in that he at the same time felt a tug at his coat-sleeve.

"What do you want now?"

"Sir, we are indebted to Doctor Gaunal for a sublime discovery; far be it from us to contest his glory; he has renewed the miracles of Egypt; but, at the same time, certain improvements have been introduced, and the results we have obtained are quite surprising. Therefore if you wish to see your friend again, just as he was when alive——"

"Zee him again!" exclaimed Schmucke. "Will he zbeak to me?"

"Well, not exactly! He will do everything *but* speak," replied the embalmer's tout. "And then he will remain to all eternity in the state in which he is, when the embalmment takes place. The operation occupies only a few minutes; an incision in the cautid artery and the injection are all that is requisite. But it is high time to begin; if you were to delay the operation for another quarter of an hour, you would be deprived of the sweet satisfaction of having preserved the body?"

"Away wid you to de tefil," said Schmucke; "Pons is a zbirit, and dat zbirit is with God!"

"The fellow hasn't a grain of gratitude in him," said the stripling tout of one of the rivals of the celebrated Gaunal as he passed through the carriage gateway. "He declines to have his friend embalmed!"

"What can you expect, sir?" said Dame Cibot, who had

"HE WAS PLUNGED INTO THE PROFOUNDEST ADVERSES OF SORROW."

just had *her* darling embalmed. "The man is an heir, a legatee. When once the dead man's goose is cooked, he is nothing whatever to them folks."

An hour afterwards Schmucke beheld Madame Sauvage, followed by a man who was dressed in black, and looked like a workman, enter the apartment.

"Sir," she said, "Canlinet has been good enough to send this gentleman here; he is the coffin-maker to the parish."

The coffin-maker bowed with an air of commiseration and condolence, but still like a man who is sure of his ground and knows himself to be indispensable, and gazed with the eye of a connoisseur at the corpse.

"How would you like the thing to be made? Of deal, plain oak, or oak lined with lead? Oak lined with lead is the correct thing. The body is of average length," said the coffin-maker, who began to handle the feet of the corpse in order to take its measure. "Five feet six and a half," he added.

Balzac (1799-1850).

A MISER.

(FROM "EUGÉNIE GRANDET.")

MONSIEUR GRANDET'S manners were very simple. He spoke little. He usually expressed his meaning by short sententious phrases uttered in a soft voice. After the Revolution, the epoch at which he first came into notice, the good man stuttered in a wearisome way as soon as he was required to speak at length or to maintain an argument. This stammering, the incoherence of his language, the flux of words in which he drowned his thought, his apparent lack of logic, attributed to defects of education, were in reality assumed. Four sentences,

precise as algebraic formulas, sufficed him usually to grasp and solve all difficulties of life and commerce: "I don't know; I cannot; I will not; I will see about it." He never said yes or no, and never committed himself to writing. If people talked to him, he listened coldly, holding his chin in his right hand, and resting his right elbow on the back of his left hand, forming in his own mind opinions on all matters, from which he never receded. He reflected long before making any business agreement. When his opponent, after careful conversation, avowed the secret of his own purposes, confident that he had secured his listener's assent, Grandet answered, "I can decide nothing without consulting my wife." His wife, whom he had reduced to a state of helpless slavery, was a useful screen to him in business. He went nowhere among friends; he neither gave nor accepted dinners; he made no stir or noise, seeming to economise in everything, even movement.

"M-m-mon-sieur le p-p-président, you said t-t-that b-b-bankruptcy——"

The stutter which for years the old miser had assumed when it suited him, and which, together with the deafness of which he sometimes complained in rainy weather, was thought in Saumur to be a natural defect. It may be as well to give the history of this impediment to the speech and hearing of Monsieur Grandet. No one in Anjou heard better, or could pronounce more crisply the French language (with an Angevin accent) than the wily old cooper. Some years earlier, in spite of his shrewdness, he had been taken in by an Israelite, who in the course of the discussion held his hand behind his ear to catch sounds, and mangled his meaning so thoroughly in trying to utter his words that Grandet fell a victim to his humanity and was compelled to prompt the wily Jew with the words and ideas he seemed to seek, to complete himself the arguments of the said Jew, to

say what that cursed Jew ought to have said for himself; in short, to be the Jew instead of being Grandet. When the cooper came out of this curious encounter he had concluded

**"DETERMINED TO REMAIN MASTER OF THE CONVERSATION AND LEAVE
HIS REAL INTENTIONS IN DOUBT."**

the only bargain of which in the course of a long commercial life he ever had occasion to complain. But if he lost at the time pecuniarily, he gained morally a valuable lesson; later,

he gathered its fruits. Indeed, the good man ended by blessing that Jew for having taught him the art of irritating his commercial antagonist and leading him to forget his own thoughts in his impatience to suggest those over which his tormentor was stuttering. No affair had ever needed the assistance of deafness, impediments of speech, and all the incomprehensible circumlocutions with which Grandet enveloped his ideas, as much as the affair now in hand. In the first place, he did not mean to shoulder the responsibility of his own scheme. In the next, he was determined to remain master of the conversation and leave his real intentions in doubt.

"M-m-monsieur de B-B-Bonfons, you-ou said th-th-that b-b-bankruptcy c-c-could, in some c-c-cases, b-be p-p-prevented b-b-by——"

"By the courts of commerce themselves. It is done constantly," said M. C. de Bonfons, bestriding Grandet's meaning, or thinking he guessed it, and kindly wishing to help him out with it. "Listen!"

"Y-yes," said Grandet humbly, with the mischievous expression of a boy who is inwardly laughing at his teacher while he pays him the greatest attention.

"When a man is respected and important, as, for example, your late brother——"

"M-my b-b-brother, yes."

"——is threatened with insolvency——"

"They c-c-call it in-ins-s-solvency?"

"Yes; when his failure is imminent, the court of commerce to which he is amenable (please follow me attentively) has the power, by a decree, to appoint a receiver. Liquidation, you understand, is not the same as failure. When a man fails, he is dishonoured; but when he merely liquidates, he remains an honest man."

"T-t-that's very d-d-different, if it d-doesn't c-c-cost m-m-more," said Grandet.

"But a liquidation can be managed without having recourse to the courts at all. For," said the president, sniffing a pinch of snuff, "don't you know how failures are declared?"

"N-n-no, I n-n-never t-t-thought," answered Grandet.

"In the first place," resumed the magistrate, "by filling the schedule in the record office of the court, which the merchant may do himself, or his representative for him, with a power of attorney duly certified. In the second place, the failure may be declared under compulsion from the creditors. Now if the merchant does not file his schedule, and if no creditor appears before the courts to obtain a decree of insolvency against the merchant, what happens?"

"W-w-what h-h-happens?"

"Why, the family of the deceased, his representatives, his heirs, or the merchant himself, if he is not dead, or his friends, if he is only hiding, liquidate his business. Perhaps you would like to liquidate your brother's affairs."

"Ah! Grandet," said the notary, "that would be the right thing to do. There is honour down-here in the provinces. If you save your name—for it is your name—you will be a man——"

"A noble man!" cried the president, interrupting his uncle.

"Certainly," answered the old man, "my b-b-brother's name was G-G-Grandet, like m-m-mine. Th-that's c-c-certain; I d-d-don't d-d-deny it. And th-th-this l-l-liquidation might be, in m-m-many ways, v-v-very advan-t-t-tageous t-t-to the interests of m-m-my n-n-nephew, whom I l-l-love. But I must consider. I don't k-k-know the t-t-tricks of P-P-Paris. I b-b-belong to Sau-m-mur, d-d-don't you see? M-m-my vines, my d-d-drains—in short, I've my own b-b-business. I never g-g-give b-b-bills. What are b-b-bills? I t-t-take a good m-m-many, but I have never s-s-signed one. I

d-d-don't understand such things. I have h-h-heard say that b-b-bills c-c-can be b-b-bought up."

"Of course," said the president. "Bills can be bought in the market, less so much per cent. Don't you understand?"

Grandet made an ear-trumpet of his hand, and the president repeated his words.

"Well, then," replied the old man, "there's s-s-something to be g-g-got out of it? I kn-know n-nothing at my age about such th-th-things. I l-l-live here and l-l-look after the v-v-vines. The vines g-g-grow, and it's the w-w-wine that p-p-pays. L-l-look after the v-v-vintage, t-t-that's my r-r-rule. My c-c-chief interests are at Froidfont. I c-c-can't l-l-leave my h-h-house to m-m-muddle myself with a d-d-devilish b-b-business I kn-know n-n-nothing about. You say I ought to l-l-liquidate my b-b-brother's af-f-fairs, to p-p-prevent the f-f-failure. I c-c-can't be in two p-p-places at once, unless I were a little b-b-bird, and——"

"I understand," cried the notary. "Well, my old friend, you have friends, old friends, capable of devoting themselves to your interests."

"All right!" thought Grandet; "make haste and come to the point!"

"Suppose one of them went to Paris and saw your brother Guillaume's chief creditor, and said to him——"

"One m-m-moment," interrupted the goodman; "said wh-wh-what? Something l-l-like th-this: Monsieur Grandet of Saumur this, Monsieur Grandet of Saumur that. He l-l-loves his b-b-brother, he loves his n-nephew—Grandet is a g-g-good uncle; he m-m-means well. He has sold his v-v-vintage. D-d-don't declare a f-f-failure; c-c-call a meeting; l-l-liquidate; and then Gr-Gr-Grandet will see what he c-c-can do. B-b-better liquidate than l-let the l-l-law st-st-stick its n-n-nose in. Hein! isn't it so?"

"Exactly so," said the president.

"B-because, don't you see, Monsieur de B-Bonfons, a

man must l-l-look b-b-before he l-leaps. If you c-c-can't, you c-c-can't. M-m-must know all about the m-m-matter, all the resources and the debts, if you d-d-don't want to be r-r-ruined. Hein! isn't it so?"

"Certainly," said the president; "I'm of opinion that in a few months the debts might be bought up for a certain sum, and then paid in full by an agreement. Ha! ha! you can coax a dog a long way if you show him a bit of lard. If there has been no declaration of failure, and you hold a lien on the debts, you come out of the business as white as the driven snow."

"Sn-n-now," said Grandet, putting his hand to his ear, "wh-wh-what about s-now?"

"But," cried the president, "do pray attend to what I am saying."

"I am at-t-tending."

"A bill is merchandise—an article of barter which rises and falls in price. This is a deduction from Jeremy Bentham's theory about usury. That writer has proved that the prejudice which condemned usurers to reprobation was mere folly."

"When?" ejaculated the good man.

"Allowing that money, according to Bentham, is an article of merchandise," resumed the president; "allowing also that it is notorious that the commercial bill bearing this or that signature is liable to the fluctuation of all commercial values, rises or falls in the market, is dear at one moment, and is worth nothing at another, the courts decide—ah! how stupid I am, I beg your pardon. I am inclined to think you could buy up your brother's debts for 25 per cent."

"D-d-did you c-c-call him Je-Je-Jeremy B-Ben——?"

"Bentham, an Englishman."

"That's a Jeremy who might save us a lot of lamentations in business," said the notary, laughing.

"Those Englishmen s-sometimes t-t-talk sense," said Grandet. "So, ac-c-cording to Ben-Bentham, if my b-b-brother's n-notes are worth n-n-nothing; is Je-Je—I'm c-c-correct, am I not? That seems c-c-clear to my m-m-mind—the c-c-creditors would be—no, would not be; I understand."

"Let me explain it all," said the president. "Legally, if you acquire a title to all the debts of the Maison Grandet, your brother or his heirs will owe nothing to any one. Very good."

"Very g-good," repeated Grandet.

"In equity, if your brother's bills are negotiated—negotiated, do you clearly understand the term?—negotiated in the market at a reduction of so much per cent. in value, and if one of your friends happening to be present should buy them in, the creditors having sold them of their own free-will without constraint, the estate of the late Grandet is honourably released."

"That's t-true; b-b-business is b-business," said the cooper. "B-b-but st-still, you know, it is d-d-difficult. I h-have no m-money and n-no t-t-time."

"Yes, but you need not undertake it. I am quite ready to go to Paris (you may pay my expenses, they will only be a trifle). I will see the creditors and talk with them, and get an extension of time, and everything can be arranged if you will add something to the assets so as to buy up all title to the debts."

"We-we'll see about th-that. I c-c-can't and I w-w-won't b-b-bind myself without—— He who c-c-can't, can't; don't you see?"

"That's very true."

"I'm all p-p-put ab-b-bout by what you've t-t-told me. This is the f-first t-t-time in my life I have b-been obliged to th-th-think——"

"Yes, you are not a lawyer."

“ I’m only a p-p-poor wine-g-grower, and know n-nothing about wh-what you have just t-told me ; I m-m-must th-think about it.”

Balzac.

CHATTERTON.

Time—1770. Place—LONDON.

[The young nobles come down, serviette in hand, and in hunting-clothes, to see the Lord Mayor. Enter six servants carrying torches and place themselves in a line. The Lord Mayor is announced.]

Kitty Bell. The Lord Mayor is coming in person to see Mr. Chatterton ! Rachel ! children ! what a piece of good fortune ! Kiss me !

John Bell. Women have unaccountable fits of folly.

Mr. Beckford (*speaking loud and settling himself heavily and pompously in a big arm-chair*). Ah ! ah ! Here are just the very people I wanted all together, I believe. Ah ! John Bell, my faithful friend ; it seems to me that it must be pleasant to live in your house ! for I see merry faces that like noise and disorder more than is reasonable. But it belongs to their age.

John Bell. My lord, your lordship is too good to do me the honour of coming a second time to my house.

Mr. Beckford. Yes, Bell, my friend ; it is the second time. Ah ! what pretty children ! Yes, it is the second time, for the first was to congratulate you on the excellent establishment of your business ; and now I consider this new house finer than ever. Your little wife looks after it, that’s so nice. Cousin Talbot, you don’t speak ! I’ve disturbed you, George ; you were entertaining your friends, weren’t you ? Talbot, cousin, you’ll never be anything but a libertine. But it belongs to your age.

MR. BECKFORD: "NOT BAD! THOUGH HE DOES WRITE POETRY."

Lord Talbot. Don't bother yourself about me, my dear lord.

Lord Lauderdale. We tell him the same thing every day, my lord.

Mr. Beckford. You too, Lauderdale; and you, Kingston! Always with him! All your nights spent in singing, gaming, and drinking? You'll all come to a bad end. But I am not angry with you; every man has a right to spend his fortune as he chooses. John Bell, is there not a young man here called Chatterton? I wished to come and see him myself.

Chatterton. It is I, my lord, who wrote to you.

Mr. Beckford. Ah! it's you, my dear boy! Come nearer that I may look at you. I knew your father, a worthy man if ever there was one; a poor soldier, but one who bravely worked his way. And so you are Thomas Chatterton? You amuse yourself by writing verses. That's all very well for once, but it must not continue. Every one has had a similar fancy at some time or other. Ha! ha! I did like you in my youth, and neither Littleton, Swift, nor Wilkes wrote gayer and more complimentary verses to beautiful women than I did.

Chatterton. I'm sure of that, my lord.

Mr. Beckford. But I only gave my leisure to the muses. I knew what Ben Jonson said:—that the finest muse in the world would not suffice to feed a man.

(Lauderdale, Kingston, and the nobles laugh.)

Lauderdale. Bravo, my lord! That's very true.

The Quaker (aside). He wants to kill him by inches.

Chatterton. As things are at the present time, my lord, nothing could be truer.

Mr. Beckford. Your story is that of a thousand young men. You've done nothing but write your damned verses, and of what use are they, I ask you? I speak to you as a father,—of what use are they? A good Englishman ought

to be of some use to his country. Now attend—what's your notion of our duties?

Chatterton (aside). For her! for her! I'll drain the cup to the dregs. (*Aloud.*) I think I understand them, my lord. England is a ship. Our island is shaped like one. The prow turned northwards; she is as if at anchor, in the midst of the seas, watching the Continent. Without ceasing, other ships made in her own image are born from her, ships that represent her on all the coasts of the world. But we all have our work aboard the big ship. The king, the nobles, the commons, are at the flag-staff, the rudder, and the compass; we are always putting our hands to the rigging, climbing the masts, setting the sails, and loading the cannon. We all belong to the crew, and not one of us is useless in guiding our splendid vessel.

Mr. Beckford. Not bad! not bad! though he does write poetry. But in agreeing with you so far, I'm right all the same. Of what use is the poet to the working of the ship?

(*A pause of expectation.*)

Chatterton. He reads in the stars the path that the finger of Providence points out to us.

Lord Talbot. What do you say to that, my lord? Do you think him wrong? The pilot is not useless.

Mr. Beckford. Imagination, my dear boy! or madness; it's the same thing. You are good for nothing, and you have made yourself so by this trash. I have heard about you, and to speak the truth, and——

Lord Talbot. My lord, he is one of my friends, and you will do me the favour to treat him politely.

Mr. Beckford. Oh! you are interested in him, George? Well, you shall be satisfied. I have done something for your *protégé*, in spite of Bale's researches. Chatterton does not know that the little tricks of his manuscript are discovered, but they are quite innocent, and I forgive them

with all my heart. The *Magisterial* is a very good paper. I bring it you to convert you, with a letter in which you will find what I propose to do for you. It's a matter of a hundred pounds a year. Do not despise it, my boy. After all, your father was not of such very high birth. He wasn't a king's brother, and you are good for nothing but what I suggest. It's a beginning.¹ You shall not leave me, and I will watch closely over you.

Chatterton (*hesitates a moment ; then, after looking at Kitty*). I consent to all, my lord. . . . (*To the Quaker.*) Have I not done all you wished? (*Aloud to Mr. Beckford.*) My lord, I will be with you directly, I must burn some papers.

Mr. Beckford. Very good ! He's curing himself of poetry.

Alfred de Vigny (1799–1864).

¹ The offer was to make the poet one of the Lord Mayor's valets ; but as Chatterton does not open the letter till he is alone in the next scene, he does not yet know its purport.

CHINA WARE.

'TIS not on you, no, Madam ! that I set
My heart ; nor, Juliet ! on you ; nor you
Ophelia, nor Beatrice, nor yet
Laura the blonde with her great eyes of blue.

My present Love is in the Flowery Land ;
She with her parents lives, an aged pair ;
Their home a tower of porcelain fine and grand
By the Yellow River, where the cormorants are.

Her eyes toward her temples are turn'd up ;
A little foot for holding in the hand
She has ; complexion like a copper cup ;
And long, long nails, the same with carmine stain'd.

Out of her lattice she her head puts forth ;
The swallow flying by she'll almost reach ;
And every night, no poet with more worth,
Sings of the willow and the bloom o' the peach.

Théophile Gautier (1808-1872).

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I PROMISED to tell you the story of my life ; it won't take long. My own mother nursed me, and weaned me at fifteen months old. Then I had an honourable mention for, I forget what, at college. Those are the most remarkable events of my life. I have never travelled. I've never seen the sea except in Vernet's pictures ; Montmartre is the only mountain I know. I can't tell wheat from oats. Although I was born on the frontiers of Spain, I'm a perfect Parisian, a regular, lounging cockney, marvelling at everything, and once beyond the city gates, unable to believe that I am still in Europe. The trees of the Tuileries and of the boulevards are my forests, the Seine is my ocean. Besides, I frankly confess I don't care a bit about that sort of thing. I prefer the picture to the thing it represents, and I should be quite capable of exclaiming, like Madame de Staël, at the sight of the Lake of Geneva : " Oh ! the gutter of the Rue St. Honoré ! "

Théophile Gautier.

THE NIGHTINGALES' NEST.

ROUND the castle there was a beautiful park. In the park were all kinds of birds : nightingales, thrushes, linnets. All the birds of the earth made a meeting-place of the park.

In springtime you could not hear yourselves speak for the warbling and chirping ; every leaf hid a nest, every tree was an orchestra. The little feathered musicians vied with each other in eager rivalry. Some chirped, others cooed ; some trilled and executed brilliant shakes, others introduced

flourishes, or embellished their songs with rests. Human musicians could not have done as well.

But in the castle were two beautiful cousins who sang better than all the birds in the park. One was named Fleurette, the other Isabeau. Both were beautiful and charming, and on Sundays, dressed in their pretty gowns, had not their white shoulders proved them to be mortals, you would have taken them for angels: only the wings were wanting. When they sang, their uncle, old Sir Maulevrier, often held their hands for fear they should take it into their heads to fly away.

I leave to your imagination the number of lances broken at the tilts and tourneys in Fleurette's and Isabeau's honour. Their reputation for beauty and talent spread over the whole of Europe, and yet they did not become vain. They lived in retirement, seeing no one except the page Valentine, a pretty fair-haired child, and Sir Maulevrier, a white-haired old man, worn and weather-beaten from his sixty years' service in the wars.

They spent their time in feeding the little birds, in saying their prayers, and chiefly in studying the works of the great composers, and in practising together some motet, madrigal, villanelle, or other music. There were also the flowers which they watered and tended themselves. Thus they spent their days in sweet and poetical occupations perfectly suited to young girls. They kept themselves retired, and far from the gaze of the world, and yet the world did not let them alone. Neither a nightingale nor a rose can be hidden; they must always be betrayed by their song and their odour. Our two cousins were at once two nightingales and two roses.

Dukes and princes asked them in marriage; the Emperor of Trebizond and the Sultan of Egypt sent ambassadors to Sir Maulevrier with proposals for an alliance. But the two cousins were not weary of a single life, and refused to

listen to a word about marriage. Perhaps some secret instinct told them that it was their mission in this world to remain unmarried, and to sing, and that in acting differently they would fail to accomplish it.

They had come to the castle when quite little. The window of their room looked on to the park, and they had been rocked to the tune of the birds' songs. They were scarcely able to stand when their uncle's minstrel, old Blondiau, placed their little hands on the ivory keys of the virginal; that was their baby's rattle. They could sing before they could speak; they sang as others breathed—by nature.

Such an education influenced their characters in a singular fashion. Their melodious childhood differed from the ordinarily turbulent and noisy period of infancy. They had never uttered a shrill cry or a discordant lament: they wept in time, and sobbed in harmony. The musical sense, developed in them at the expense of the others, made them well-nigh insensible to all that was not music. They floated on a sea of melody, and scarcely perceived the actual world except by sounds. They perfectly understood the rustling of the leaves, the murmur of the waters, the striking of the clock, the sighing of the wind in the chimney, the hum of the spinning-wheel, the falling of the raindrop on the vibrating window-pane, all exterior and interior harmonies. But I must confess a sunset roused no great enthusiasm in them, and they were as little able to appreciate a painting as if their beautiful blue and black eyes had been covered with a thick film. They had the malady of music; they dreamed of it, and could neither eat nor drink: they cared for nothing else in the world. Yes, they cared for two things besides—Valentine and their flowers: Valentine because he resembled the roses, and the roses because they resembled Valentine. But that love was entirely relegated to the second place. It is true that Valentine was only

thirteen years old. Their greatest delight was to sit at the window of an evening, and sing the music they had composed during the day.

The most celebrated musicians came from far to hear them, and to compete with them. Scarcely had they listened to a few bars than they broke their instruments and tore up their scores, declaring themselves vanquished. It was in fact such wondrous and melodious music that the heavenly angels came to the casement with the other musicians, and learned it by heart to sing to the good God.

One May evening the cousins were singing a motet for two voices ; never had so beautiful an air been so splendidly worked out and rendered. A nightingale from the park, snugly perched on a rose-tree, listened to them attentively. When they had finished, he approached the window, and said in his nightingale language, "I want to enter into a singing competition with you."

The cousins signified their willingness, and that it was for him to begin.

The nightingale commenced. He was a master nightingale. His throat swelled, his wings fluttered, his body trembled. The runs, the intricate passages, the arpeggios, the chromatic scales, seemed never-ending. He ran up and down the scale, he held on the notes, he rounded his cadences with discouraging purity : you would have said that his voice had wings like his body. He stopped, sure of victory.

The two cousins sang in their turn ; they surpassed themselves. By the side of theirs, the nightingale's song seemed but the chirping of a sparrow.

The winged *virtuoso* made a last effort. He sang a romance of love, then executed a brilliant fanfare, ending with a number of shrill and vibrating high notes beyond the range of the human voice.

Undismayed by this master stroke, the two cousins turned

the leaves of their music-books, and replied to the nightingale in such a fashion that St. Cecilia, who was listening to them from the distant spheres of heaven, became pale with envy, and let her bass viol fall to the ground.

The nightingale tried to sing again, but the contest had entirely exhausted him : his breath failed him, his feathers were all ruffled ; in spite of himself his eyes closed ; he was dying.

"You sing better than I do," he said to the cousins. "The vanity of wishing to excel you has cost me my life. I ask one boon of you. I have a nest ; in the nest are three little ones ; it is the third wild rose-bush in the broad walk beside the lake. Have them fetched, bring them up, and teach them to sing as you do, for I am about to die."

So saying, the nightingale died. The two cousins wept for him bitterly, for he had sung well. They summoned Valentine, the little fair-haired page, and told him where the nest was. Valentine, who was a clever little fellow, easily found the place ; he put the nest in his doublet, and brought it without accident. Fleurette and Isabeau, leaning against the balcony, impatiently awaited him. Valentine soon arrived, holding the nest in his hands. The three little ones put out their heads, opening their bills wide. The girls pitied the poor orphans, and fed each one in turn. When they were a little older, they began their musical education as they had promised the vanquished nightingale.

It was wonderful to see how tame they were, how well they sung. They flew about the room, perching now on Isabeau's head, now on Fleurette's shoulder. They placed themselves in front of the music-book, and you would have said that they were really able to make out the notes, they looked at the black and white keys with such an air of intelligence. They had learned all Fleurette's and Isabeau's tunes, and began to improvise very pretty ones themselves.

The two cousins lived more and more in solitude, and of an evening sounds of a supernatural melody were heard coming from their rooms. The nightingales, perfectly well educated, took part in the concert, and sang almost as well as their mistresses, who, themselves, had made great progress.

Every day their voices gained extraordinarily in brilliance, and vibrated in a metallic and crystalline fashion above the register of the natural voice. The girls grew visibly thinner; they lost their fine colour, and became pale as agates, and almost as transparent. Sir Maulevrier tried to prevent their singing, but his entreaties were of no avail.

When they had sung a few bars, a little red spot made its appearance on their cheeks, and kept growing bigger and bigger until they had finished. Then the spot disappeared, but a cold perspiration flowed from their skin, and their lips trembled as though they had fever.

However, their singing was more beautiful than ever. It had something that was not of this world; and to hear the sonorous and powerful voices coming from the two frail young girls, it was not difficult to foretell what would happen—the music would destroy the instrument.

They saw this themselves, and began to play on the virginal, an instrument they had neglected for their singing. But one night the window was open, the birds were warbling in the park, the breeze was sighing harmoniously. There was so much music in the air that they could not resist the temptation of singing a duet that they had composed the day before.

It was the song of the swan, a marvellous song steeped in tears, ascending to the most inaccessible heights of the scale, and descending again to the lowest note; a dazzling and marvellous song, a deluge of trills, a burning shower of chromatic passages, musical fireworks, not to be described. But the little red spot grew ever bigger, and almost covered their cheeks. The three nightingales looked at

them, and listened with a strange anxiety ; their wings fluttered, they flew now here, now there, and could not keep still. At length the girls came to the last bars of the piece, and their voices assumed such a strange sort of sonority that it was easily seen that the singers were no longer living creatures. The nightingales had flown away. The two cousins were dead ; with the last note their souls had passed out from them. The nightingales ascended straight to heaven, in order to carry the supreme song to the good God, who kept them in Paradise to perform the music of the two cousins for his delight.

Later, the good God formed out of those three nightingales the souls of Palestrina, Cimarosa, and Gluck.

Théophile Gautier.

UNDER THE TABLE.

IT might have been two o'clock in the morning. The candle, unsnuffed, was guttering. The fire was nearly out.

My friend Theodore, leaning on the table with a truly bacchic unconcern, was smoking a short black pipe, nobly blackened, a veritable cutty pipe, calculated to wake envy in a corporal of the Old Guard.

Now and then he put down his pipe, and gravely lifted his glass over his shoulder, or to the side of his mouth, or poured out from an empty bottle, or let his full glass fall. In short, our friend Theodore was completely drunk.

And that would not have astonished any one who noted the long line of bottles.

Unless he had thrown their contents out of the window, which was unlikely, he must be mathematically and logically dead drunk. There would have been enough to make a drum-major and two bell-ringers tipsy, and our friend Theodore was alone.

I confess it with a blush, he was alone in spite of the famous adage: He who drinks alone is unworthy to live. An adage religiously followed in every state that pretends to any civilisation.

He was alone—that is to say, he seemed to be so; for a deep sigh coming from under the table suddenly revealed a capsized comrade, and made it easier to explain the formidable array of empty and broken bottles that filled the table.

With an expression of ineffable pity, Theodore let fall from above an uncertain stupefied glance on the shapeless mass moving about in the shadow, and blew out noisily a mouthful of smoke.

“Oh, Theodore, your beastly floor is as hard as a woman’s heart. Give me your hand; I want to get up and have something to drink; I’m thirsty.”

“If you like, I’ll give you your glass,” replied Theodore, feeling sure that he was too far gone to help his comrade up. “How can a man soak himself like that! Fie, the drunkard,” he added by way of reflection.

“Unnatural being,” rejoined the voice from below, “you won’t help me up? Then fix lamps to people’s heads, so that carriages may not run over them when they fall off the curb because they forgot to water their wine that day. I’ll not be friends with you any more. Ungrateful wretch!”

Theodore, moved and softened by that touching remembrance, determined to attempt the dangerous operation of placing his friend on his chair. But the pious enterprise was not crowned with success. He made a plunge between the table and the seat and disappeared.

For a few minutes dull stifled grunting might be heard; for Theodore had fallen on top of his friend, and he weighed on him more than remorse. However, after immense efforts, they succeeded in getting into a less uncomfortable position, and quiet was restored.

After a rather long silence—

"Alas!" said Roderick.

"What's the matter, my dear fellow?" said Theodore, with the characteristic effusion of drunkards.

"I'm very unhappy."

"Is it your sweetheart's fault?"

"On the contrary, the poor woman's not capable of that. To my sorrow, she's the most virtuous creature going."

Theodore sighed.

"What is virtue, Theodore?"

"What do I know?"

"That's out of Montaigne, and the most sensible thing you've said since you've abused the language God gave you. Brutus defined virtue as a name. In fact, if it is a name, never have six letters met together to form a more insignificant word. Virtue is essentially negative. What is virtue if not to say no to everything that is pleasant in life, an absurd struggle with natural inclinations and passions, the triumph of hypocrisy and falsehood over truth. When States were founded on fictions, fictitious virtues were necessary, otherwise they could not have existed. But in a positive age, under a constitutional monarchy, surrounded by republican institutions, it is indecent and ill-bred to be virtuous. Only convicts are virtuous. As for virtuous women, the race is extinct. They are all in *Perè-Lachaise* or elsewhere. The epitaphs bear witness to the fact."

"But you said just now that your sweetheart was virtuous?"

"Curse you! when one says that all women are bad, it is always understood that one's mother and one's sweetheart are excepted. So your remark has not even common sense."

"My Aunt Gryselde," interrupted Theodore, "was a virtuous woman."

"My dear fellow, your father and mother neglected to

endow you with brains. Your Aunt Gyselde was hump-backed, red-haired, gat-toothed, and squint-eyed. She had no temptation."

"You're a materialist, Roderick?"

"Of course, so are all intelligent men. So ought you to be, for it's very evident that there exists some hundred odd pounds of flesh called Theodore; and the existence of his mind is, to say the least of it, problematical, judging from the idiotic conversation we are indulging in."

"It occurs to me, Roderick, that we might as well try to get on to our chairs again."

"Why? let us remain on the floor now we're there. People should follow our example. The world would jog along all the better."

"So be it, then," rejoined the other. "It's more bacchic and more shameless; there's more character about it. But you commenced by lamenting the virtue of your sweetheart, and it seems that the conversation has terribly digressed."

"My dear fellow, you have no idea what torture I endure, having never experienced anything of the sort yourself. It's the most unfortunate thing imaginable to love any one who has no vice. The vices of our friends and sweethearts attach us to them, because they afford us the means of flattering them, and making ourselves agreeable to them. You make yourself the slave and purveyor of one of their vices, you become necessary to them, and thus the most lasting friendships are formed."

The two friends turned their backs and snored loudly.

A month afterwards they found themselves under the same table, and had a serious conversation, which ended by sending all women to the devil!

From that time they got drunk every day, and thought themselves extremely well off.

Théophile Gautier.

SERENADE.

SWEET, as you bend from the window-sill
 'Tis but a little to clasp your charms,
 How little, and yet, do all I will,
 I cannot attain your outstretch'd arms.

Tho' your duenna has door ajar,
 Throw me a collar, a ribbon of gold,
 Or from the strings of your sweet guitar
 Weave me a ladder—or, darling, hold—

Take out your flowers, let down your hair,
 Hang over me, dear, your long black tresses,
 A torrent of jet whose soft waves dare
 To clasp your feet in their wild caresses.

O ladder sublime ! divinely quaint !
 'Tis but a touch, and I'll lightly fly,
 'Mid scented odour, and perfume faint,
 And tho' not an angel reach the sky !

Théophile Gautier.

AN ARISTOCRAT.

(FROM "MADEMOISELLE DE LA SEIGLIÈRE.")

The Marquis. What a row ! those creatures didn't make
 a greater fuss when I returned.

The Baronne. That cursed lawyer.

The Marq. Oh ! I'll thrash him within an inch of his
 life ; and as for his client——

The Bar. Be calm.

The Marq. (striding up and down). What! a rascal, whose mother sold the milk of her cows to our family for ten years, dares to insult me in my own house, and I am not to object!

The Bar. Be calm, I say.

The Marq. A beggarly fellow, who thirty years ago would have thought himself happy to be allowed to groom and water my horses.

The Bar. Benefits of the Revolution!

The Marq. The wretch! But didn't you hear with what emphasis this son of a ploughman spoke of the sweat of his father? When they've said that, they've said everything. The sweat! The sweat of their fathers! Impertinent creatures! Fools! As if their fathers invented sweat and labour! Do they imagine that our fathers did not sweat too? Do they think you sweat less under a coat of mail than under a smock?

The Bar. He may come in at any moment.

The Marq. And Destournelles, with his hero of Volontina. There are your heroes! There are the famous encounters Monsieur de Bonaparte made so much fuss about! It seems that all told the dead picked themselves up, and the killed are only the better for it. Madame, when a La Seiglière falls it is never to rise again.

The Bar. That is right!

The Marq. But when a Stamply is killed in the service of France he must needs come and tell people so himself. If this rascal had a penn'orth of feeling he would blush for shame that he was alive, and would go and throw himself head foremost into the river.

The Bar. (laughing). What will you have? Those people have no idea of propriety.

The Marq. Well, let him live, but let him hide himself. "Hide your life," said the wise man. Why didn't he stop in Siberia? He was quite used to it.

The Marquis. Ah ! Jasmin, is that you ? Hasn't Madame de Vaubert come yet ?

Jasmin (his servant). No, Monsieur, but there is some one——

The Marq. That's strange ! She always boasts that she gets up much earlier than I do. She's only got to come along the lime-walk that separates our houses. Can she have forgotten her promise to drive to the hunt to-day ?

Hélène (his daughter). Father, Madame de Vaubert was not very well yesterday.

The Marq. Nonsense ! I never felt better in my life. Jasmin !

Jas. Monsieur ?

The Marq. Did Brisée, the huntsman, remain at the Chambly cross-roads as I ordered him ?

Jas. Yes, Monsieur.

The Marq. All night ?

Jas. All night.

The Marq. Well ! what does he say ?

Jas. He says—that he's got the rheumatics all up his back——

The Marq. Bah ! I want to know what he says of the stag I started yesterday ?

Jas. Ah ! that's another matter, Monsieur. He says that the stag's covert is in the rowan wood.

The Marq. Hurrah ! we shall catch him.

Jas. He adds that it's a stag that will lead you a nice dance.

The Marq. By Jove ! so much the better. Are his hoofs and bones big ?

Jas. Very big.

The Marq. Is he short-jointed ?

Jas. He didn't say.

The Marq. I shall find out, and by all the devils that stag shall hear of me. But Madame de Vaubert's not here.

Almost nine o'clock, and her son, a Vaubert, your fiancé, Hélène, keeps you waiting the day of a hunt! Doubtless he spent the night in labelling the pebbles and herbs his pockets were stuffed full of last evening. To the devil with science and scholars! I'm as hungry as a tiger this morning.

Jas. (aside). This morning! Any one would think that other days—— (*Aloud.*) Monsieur!

The Marq. What is it?

Jas. A visitor came for you——

The Marq. A visitor? at this hour?

Jas. A stranger, who refused to give his name.

The Marq. Let him keep it. You were perfectly right to send him off.

Jas. I beg your pardon, Monsieur, he insisted——

The Marq. And you persisted. Better and better.

Jas. But the gentleman said it was about a matter of business——

The Marq. Then you sent him to the steward. Quite right.

Jas. I beg your pardon, Monsieur, but he's there——

The Marq. Now, Jasmin, that's quite enough. I have no business, and that of other people doesn't interest me. Not a word more, I beg.

[*Jasmin is unfastening the Marquis's gaiters.*]

The Marq. Well, fellow, are you satisfied? You can tell everybody how your master shot a full-grown stag.

Jas. Already nothing is talked of but your honour's last exploit.

The Marq. (pinching his ear). You've nothing to complain of, you rascal!

Jas. Ah!

The Marq. (pinching harder). You've nothing to grumble

at in serving so distinguished a master. I don't know why I give you any wages.

Jas. La Brisée says that your honour was covered with glory to-day.

The Marq. Zounds! Wasn't I at Fontenoy? (*Jasmin has taken off the gaiters. The Marquis rubs his calves.*) Jasmin, what do you say to those?

Jas. (kneeling by the Marquis's side). Surely your honour has the finest calves in Poitou.

The Marq. How firm they are! Feel, Jasmin, I give you leave—marble!

Jas. Better than that. Bronze moulded in a silk stocking.

The Marq. I'm sure M. de Bonaparte would have found it no easy matter to show as good. Don't you see, Jasmin, that without the emigration there would be no calves in France; we have saved them.

Jas. Now, if your honour wanted to marry again.

The Marq. You flatter me, you rascal! But I forgive you. Come, pour me out another glass of the old wine that makes my heart young again. By Jove, life is sweet! Can you conceive it, Jasmin? There are actually people who complain of life? Why, I even like looking at your stupid face.

Jas. Ah! ah! Your honour is very kind.

Jules Sandeau (1811-1883).

MONSIEUR PERRICHON'S TOUR.

[SCENE.—*The Lyons Railway Station in Paris. A door opposite leading into the waiting-rooms. The booking-office window on the right, benches on the left. A confectioner's stall, and a book-stall.*]

Perrichon (a retired coach-builder). This way. We mustn't lose sight of one another. We should never find each other

again. Where's the luggage? Ah! it's all right. Who's got the umbrellas?

Henriette (his daughter). I, papa.

Per. And the bag and the wraps?

Mme. Per. (his wife). Here they are.

Per. And my straw hat? It must have been left in the cab. (*About to rush out, then stopping.*) Why, I've got it in my hand. Heavens! how hot I am!

Mme. Per. It's all your own fault. You hurry and bustle us in this horrid fashion. I don't care for travelling, if it's all like this.

Per. The getting off is always troublesome. Once we're in the train. You stop here, I'll go and take the tickets. (*Giving his hat to Henriette.*) Take care of my straw hat. (*At the ticket-office.*) Three first-class for Lyons.

The Porter (roughly). It's not open. In a quarter of an hour.

Per. (to the porter). I beg your pardon. I've never travelled before. (*Going back to his wife.*) We're too early.

Mme. Per. Didn't I tell you we had plenty of time? Fancy not letting us get any breakfast!

Per. It's far better to be early. We can see the station. (*To Henriette.*) Well, little one, are you happy? Here we are just about to start. In a few minutes we shall be flying towards the Alps, swift as Tell's arrow. (*To his wife.*) You've got the field-glass?

Mme. Per. Oh, yes!

Hen. (to her father). But you know, father, you've been promising us this tour for at least two years.

Per. My darling, I had to dispose of my business. A tradesman can't leave his business as easily as a little girl her boarding-school. And, besides, I waited till you'd finished your education, so that I might put the finishing touches to it, by laying before you the grand spectacle of nature.

Mme. Per. Good gracious ! Are you always going on like that ?

Per. Like what ?

Mme. Per. Fancy speaking in set phrases in a railway station !

Per. I'm not speaking in set phrases. I'm cultivating my child's mind. (*Taking a note-book from his pocket.*) Here, Henriette, is a note-book I bought for you.

Hen. What for ?

Per. To record expenses on one side, and impressions on the other.

Hen. What impressions ?

Per. Our impressions of travel. You will write, and I shall dictate.

Mme. Per. You're never going to turn author at this time of day !

Per. It's no question of turning author. But it seems to me a man of the world may have thoughts and write them down.

Mme. Per. Oh ! it'll be charming !

Per. (aside). She's always like that before she's had breakfast.

A Porter (pushing a truck piled with luggage). Monsieur, here's your luggage ; will you register it ?

Per. Certainly. But, first, let me count it, because when you know your number—one, two, three, four, five, six, wife seven, daughter eight, self nine. We are nine.

Daniel (entering, followed by a commissionaire carrying his trunk). Wait ! I don't know yet where I'm going. (*Perceiving Henriette.*) It is she—I'm not mistaken. (*He bows to Henriette, who returns his greeting.*)

Mme. Per. (to her daughter). Who is that gentleman ?

Hen. He's a young man I danced with last week at the ball at the Mairie of the eighth arrondissement.

Mme. Per. (pleased). A partner! (*She bows to Daniel.*)

Dan. Madame and Mademoiselle, I bless my good fortune—you're about to start for——

Mme. Per. Yes, Monsieur.

Dan. Doubtless you're going to Marseilles?

Mme. Per. No, Monsieur.

Dan. To Nice, perhaps?

Mme. Per. No, Monsieur.

Dan. I beg your pardon, I thought I might be of some use. (*Aside.*) I should like to know where they're going before I take my ticket. But they are going, and that's the main point. (*Exit.*)

Mme. Per. He's a very nice young man.

Armand (entering, carrying a bag, and perceiving Henriette).
It's she. (*They bow.*)

Mme. Per. Who is that gentleman?

Hen. Oh, he's another young man with whom I danced at the ball.

Mme. Per. Is this a rendezvous for all of them? Never mind, he's a partner. (*Bowing.*) Monsieur——

Arm. Madame, Mademoiselle, I bless my good fortune—you're about to start for——

Mme. Per. Yes, Monsieur.

Arm. Doubtless you're going to Marseilles?

Mme. Per. No, Monsieur.

Arm. To Nice, perhaps?

Mme. Per. (aside). Exactly like the other. (*Aloud.*)
No, Monsieur.

Arm. I beg your pardon, I thought I might be of some use.

Mme. Per. (aside). There's no doubt that they both come from the same arrondissement.

Mme. Per. Whatever is your father doing? My legs are giving way under me.

Hen. Papa's looking after the luggage.

Per. (in a terrible hurry, to the booking-office clerk). They won't register my luggage till I've taken the tickets.

The Porter. It's not open. You must wait.

Fer. Wait! why, over there they told me to make haste! (*Wiping his forehead.*) I'm all perspiring.

Mme. Per. And as for me, I'm ready to drop.

Per. Well, sit down (*pointing to the benches*). There are seats. How stupid to stand here like two sentinels!

Mme. Per. But you told us yourself to stop here. There's no end to it. You're unendurable.

Per. Caroline, Caroline!

Mme. Per. I've had enough of your precious tour already.

Per. It's easy to see you haven't had your breakfast. Go and sit down.

Mme. Per. Very well, but make haste. (*She and Henriette sit down.*)

Mme. Per. (*getting up*). I'm sick of sitting down.

Per. (*entering, running*). At last! everything's done. I've got the tickets—I'm registered.

Mme. Per. Well, that's a good thing. Shall we go on to the platform?

Per. One moment. Henriette, take your note-book and write.

Mme. Per. What! already!

Per. (*dictating*). Expenses. Cab: two francs. Tickets: one hundred and seventy-two francs, five centimes. Porters: one franc.

Hen. Yes?

Per. Now write impressions.

Mme. Per. (*aside*). He's unendurable.

Per. (*dictating*). Farewell, France, queen of nations (*interrupting himself*), where's my straw hat? I've left it with the luggage. (*About to rush off.*)

Mme. Per. No, here it is.

Per. Ah! of course. (*Dictating.*) Farewell, France, queen of nations. (*The bell rings, several travellers enter.*)

Mme. Per. There's the bell. We shall lose the train.

Per. Very well, let us go. We can finish later on.

[*Exeunt.*

(*Daniel enters. He has just taken his ticket, and knocks up against Armand, who is just going to take his.*)

Arm. Take care!

Dan. Take care yourself!

Arm. Daniel!

Dan. Armand!

Arm. You're going away?

Dan. At once. And you?

Arm. So am I.

Dan. That's splendid. We'll travel together. I've got some capital cigars. Where are you going?

Arm. By Jove! my dear fellow, I don't know yet.

Dan. How curious! Neither do I. I've taken a ticket to Lyons.

Arm. And so will I. I intend to follow a charming girl.

Dan. So do I.

Arm. A coach-builder's daughter?

Dan. Perrichon?

Arm. Perrichon.

Dan. The same.

Arm. But I adore her, my dear Daniel.

Dan. And so do I, my dear Armand.

Arm. I wish to make her my wife.

Dan. I intend to ask her hand, which is very nearly the same thing.

Arm. We can't both marry her. What's to be done?

Dan. Oh! it's quite simple. Since we're just about to start, let us cheerfully proceed on our journey. Let us each seek to gain her favour, to win her love.

Arm. (laughing). It's a competition, a tournament.

Dan. A loyal and friendly combat. If you win, I shall withdraw. If I carry off the prize, you won't owe me a grudge. What do you say?

Arm. So be it. I accept.

Dan. Your hand before the battle.

Arm. And yours after. (*They shake hands.*)

Per. (entering, hurriedly). I tell you, there's plenty of time. (*To the young lady at the bookstall.*) I want a book for my wife and daughter. A book that contains nothing about love-making, money, politics, marriage, or death.

Dan. (aside). Robinson Crusoe.

The Bookseller. Yes, Monsieur; I've exactly what will suit you (*putting a volume into his hand*).

Per. (reading). "The Banks of the Saône," two francs. (*As he pays.*) You're sure there's nothing foolish in it? (*The bell rings.*) Oh, hang it! Good-day, Madame. (*He rushes out.*)

Labiche (1815-1888).

I AM an author's pipe : you see
From my complexion, dark of tan
As face of Abyssinian,
How great a smoker he must be.



When grief lies on him heavily,
 As from a hut where pot and pan
 Steaming await the husbandman,
 Returning, smoke-wreaths rise from me.

In vapoury meshes, soft and fine,
 That mount up from my fiery bowl,
 I tangle and I lull his soul.

And with a potent anodyne
 I soothe his heart, and heal no less
 His spirit of its weariness.

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1866).

GET DRUNK.

YOU must always get drunk. That is the one essential thing. In order not to feel the terrible burden of Time weighing on your shoulders and felling you to the ground, you must get drunk without cessation.

But on what? Wine, poetry, virtue, as you please. But get drunk.

And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace, on the green grass of a ditch, in the gloomy solitude of your chamber, you awake, the intoxication already lessened or vanished, ask the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock, everything that flies, everything that groans, everything that rolls on, everything that sings, everything that speaks, ask what o'clock it is. And the wind, the wave, the star, the bird, the clock will reply, "It is time to get drunk! In order not to be martyred slaves of Time, get drunk; get drunk without cessation! on wine, poetry, or virtue, as you please!"

Charles Baudelaire.

THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

FOR five or six years Marcel worked at his famous picture, the "Passage of the Red Sea," and for five or six years the masterpiece had been obstinately rejected by the jury. Thus by reason of its numerous journeys from the artist's studio to the Museum, and from the Museum to the artist's studio, the picture knew the way so well that if it had been set on wheels it would have been perfectly capable of getting to the Louvre by itself. Marcel, who had repainted it ten times over, and had altered the canvas from top to bottom, attributed the painting's annual ostracism to the personal enmity of the members of the jury.

For a long time, however, Marcel was in no wise discouraged by its invariable rejection. Every year, as the Salon exhibition drew near, Marcel sent up his picture to the jury. But in order to puzzle the judges, and to try and break down the attitude of exclusion they seemed to have assumed in regard to the "Passage of the Red Sea," Marcel, without interfering with the general scheme, modified a detail or two, and changed the picture's name.

Thus, once it came before the jury as the "Passage of the Rubicon," but Pharaoh, clumsily disguised by Cæsar's cloak, was recognised, and rejected with all due respect.

Next year Marcel threw a covering of white to represent snow over the foreground of his canvas, planted a fir-tree in one corner, and dressing an Egyptian in the uniform of a grenadier of the Imperial Guard, baptised the picture, "Passage of the Beresina." But the jury recognised the picture immediately, especially a great big many-coloured horse, which pranced on the top of one of the waves of the Red Sea, and they had not enough black-balls to reject the "Passage of the Beresina." "Never mind," said Marcel, "I still have hopes. Next year I'll send it again, and call it '*Passage des Panoramas*.'" ¹

A few days later, when Marcel had already forgotten the terrible plans of vengeance against his persecutors, Father Medicis paid him a visit. This was the nickname given by the club to a Jew called Solomon, who was at that time well known to all literary and artistic Bohemia, with which he was connected in various ways. Father Solomon dealt in all sorts of *bric-à-brac*. He sold complete sets of furniture from twelve francs to a thousand crowns. He bought all and anything, and knew where to sell it at a profit. Medicis's entry was hailed with a joyous shout, for it was well known that the Jew's time was too valuable to be

¹ Name of an arcade in Paris.

wasted in complimentary visits: his presence invariably announced some piece of business.

"M. Marcel," said Medicis, "I've come to make your fortune, that is, to offer you a splendid opportunity of entering the artistic world. A rich amateur, who is setting up a gallery, destined to travel the length and breadth of Europe, has commissioned me to procure him a series of remarkable works. In short, I want to buy your 'Passage of the Red Sea.'"

"For ready money?" asked Marcel.

"For ready money," replied the Jew.

The bargain was concluded for a hundred and fifty francs, and a dinner thrown in.

A week after the feast, Marcel discovered the gallery which his picture adorned. Passing through the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, he stopped in the midst of a crowd that seemed to be gazing curiously at a sign-board placed above a shop. That sign-board was nothing else than Marcel's picture; Medicis had sold it to a provision merchant. But the "Passage of the Red Sea" had undergone yet another modification; a steamboat had been added, and it was called "In Marseilles Harbour."

Henry Murger (1822-1861).

THE INITIATION OF CAROLUS BARBEMUCHE.

AS they went along, Barbemuche invited Colline to have something to drink at a *café* they passed. Not only did Colline refuse, but outside the *café* he doubled his pace, and carefully pulled his hyperphysical felt hat low down over his eyes.

"Why won't you go in there?" said Barbemuche, pressing him most politely.

"I have reasons," replied Colline. "At that establishment there's a lady who pays great attention to the exact sciences, and I could not help having a very long discussion with her—a thing I try to avoid by never coming this way at midday, or indeed by daylight at all."

Carolus, credulous as a child of the golden age, accepted the excuse. But a hundred paces further on he asked Colline to go into another *café*. The philosopher refused for reasons akin to those he had stated before. That time Barbemuche was less easily put off, and with a smile timidly asked for an explanation.

"Oh! it's quite simple," replied Colline. "Marcel and I lived in this neighbourhood."

"But I should like to offer you a glass of punch, and have a few moments' conversation with you. Don't you know some place about here where you would not be prevented going by—philosophical difficulties," added Barbemuche, who thought he ought to be excessively witty.

Colline reflected an instant, and then said, "There's a little place where my situation is easier—since I've never entered it," and he pointed to a wine-shop.

Barbemuche decided to go in, although it seemed to him a very queer sort of place. He became more communicative, and after a few details about himself, ventured to give expression to his hope of becoming officially a member of the Bohemian Club, and begged Colline to aid him in that ambitious design.

Colline replied that as far as he was concerned Barbemuche might rely on him, but that he could promise nothing absolutely. "You may count on my vote, but I can't take upon myself to dispose of those of my companions."

"You think, then, that those gentlemen will make difficulties about admitting me to the honour of their intimacy?"

"I fear so," said Colline. "Do you live far from here?"

"At 10 Rue Royale Saint-Honoré."

Colline recollected that he had once had occasion to go to that house, and that it was a magnificent building.

The Bohemians took counsel together with regard to receiving Carolus Barbemuche into their society, and came to the following conclusion.

Since the introduction of a new member into the club was a very serious matter, because a stranger ignorant of the morals, characters, and opinions of his companions might introduce elements of discord, each of the members should spend a day with the said Carolus, and employ himself in inquiring into his life, tastes, literary capacity, and wardrobe. Afterwards the Bohemians should tell each other their private impressions, and on that would be determined Barbemuche's admission or rejection. Further, before admission he must undergo a month's novitiate—that is to say, that until after that period he would not have the right to address them as intimate friends,¹ or to walk arm in arm with them in the streets. On the day of the initiation a splendid entertainment must be given, at the expense of the new member. The rejoicings could not cost less than twelve francs.

The result was that Barbemuche passed his novitiate, and was admitted a member of the Bohemian Club.

One morning, Colline, with radiant face, went to see Barbemuche.

"Well, my dear fellow," he said, "you are definitely one of us. It's all settled, and we've only to fix the day of the great entertainment, and the place where it shall be held. I want to consult you about it."

"Oh! that's easily arranged," replied Carolus. "My pupil's parents are out of town, and the young count whose tutor I am will let me have the use of his father's reception

¹ *Tutoyer*.

rooms for one evening. So we shall be very comfortable. But we must invite the young count."

Carolus went in search of his pupil, and told him that he had just been elected a member of an important literary and artistic society, and that he ought to give a dinner to celebrate the event. He proposed to invite the count, and added, "As the entertainment will be prolonged far into the night, let us, for our own convenience, have it here in your house. Your servant François is discreet, your parents will never know anything about it, and you will make the acquaintance of the wittiest people in Paris, artists, authors. They are very distinguished, almost celebrated. I am their intimate friend. They have very pretty wives."

"There'll be ladies?" asked Count Paul.

"Charming ones," replied Carolus.

"Oh! my dearest tutor, thank you ever so much. Of course we'll have the entertainment here; we'll light all the chandeliers, and I'll have the covers taken off the furniture."

In the evening Barbemuche informed the members of the club that the entertainment would take place the Saturday following.

On the morning of the great occasion this is what happened: Colline, Schaunard, Marcel, and Rodolphe repaired in a body to Barbemuche's, who was surprised to see them so early.

Had some accident occurred which would necessitate the postponement of the dinner, he asked anxiously.

"Yes, and no," replied Colline. "This is the difficulty. Among ourselves we never make any ceremony, but when we are to be with strangers we like to observe a certain decorum."

"Well?" said Barbemuche.

"Well," continued Colline, "as, this evening, we are to meet a young gentleman who is opening his house to us, out of respect to him and to ourselves, since our somewhat

neglected toilet might compromise us, we came to ask you to lend us some more respectable-looking garments. You can readily understand how impossible it is for us to enter these magnificent halls in jackets and great-coats."

"But," said Carolus, "I haven't four dress-coats."

"Never mind," said Colline; "we'll manage with what you have."

"There, then," said Carolus, throwing open a fairly well filled wardrobe.

"But you've a complete arsenal of elegant attire."

"Three hats!" said Schaunard with ecstasy. "What can you want with three hats for one head?"

"And just look at the boots," said Rodolphe.

"Ah! the boots," shouted Colline.

And in an instant they had each chosen a complete equipment.

"Good-bye, till to-night," they said, going away.

"But," objected Barbemuche, glancing at the empty pegs, "you've left nothing for me. How am I to receive you?"

"Oh! for you, it's a different matter; you're the master of the house—you needn't bother about etiquette."

"But," said Carolus, "you've taken everything except a dressing-gown, a pair of breeches, a flannel waistcoat, and some slippers."

"What does it matter? We excuse you in advance," replied the Bohemians.

At six o'clock an excellent dinner was served in the dining-room. The Bohemians arrived. Marcel limped a little, and was cross. The dinner lasted two hours, and was extremely merry. Schaunard was somewhat tipsy, Rodolphe improvised sonnets, and broke the glasses to mark the rhythm. Colline chatted with Marcel, who was very sulky.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"My feet hurt me horribly, and that bothers me. Carolus has got a foot like an elegant young lady's."

"But," said Colline, "it'll be all right if he's made to understand that he must alter that, and in future have his boots and shoes made bigger. Be comforted, I'll see to it. But let's go into the drawing-room, where heavenly liqueurs await us."

The entertainment went on with greater brilliance than before. Schaunard sat down to the piano and played his new symphony, "The Death of the Young Girl," with prodigious animation. The splendid movement of the "Creditor's March" was encored three times. Two notes of the piano were broken.

Marcel continued in the sulks, and, as Carolus observed it, the artist replied—

"My dear sir, we can never be intimate friends, and for this reason. Physical unlikenesses are nearly always the index of a certain moral unlikeness, philosophy and medicine are agreed about that."

"Well?" asked Carolus.

"Well!" said Marcel, showing his feet, "unfortunately your boots are too tight for me, and that proves that our dispositions are unlike. Otherwise your entertainment has been delightful."

At one in the morning the party broke up, and the Bohemians returned to their homes by long detours. Barbemuche was ill, and discoursed madly to his pupil.

Henry Murger.

A BOHEMIAN EVENING PARTY.

TOWARDS the end of December the messengers of Bidault's agency were commissioned to distribute about a hundred copies of an invitation, of which the following is a faithful reproduction :—

"M. —

"MM. Rodolphe and Marcel request the honour of your company on Saturday evening next, Christmas Eve.

"There will be fine fun !

"PROGRAMME OF THE ENTERTAINMENT.

"At 7 P.M., opening of the reception rooms ; lively and animated conversation.

"At 8 P.M., entrance and walk through the rooms of the talented authors of the *Mountain in Labour*, comedy refused at the Odéon Theatre.

"At 8.30 P.M., M. Alexandre Schaunard, the celebrated *virtuoso*, will perform on the piano: 'The Influence of Blue in the Arts,' descriptive symphony.

"At 9 P.M., first reading of the paper on 'The Abolition of the Penalty in Tragedy.'

"At 9.30 P.M., M. Gustave Colline, hyperphysical philosopher, and Monsieur Schaunard will hold a debate comparing dephilosophy and metapolitics. In order to avoid any collision between the antagonists, they will each be securely fastened.

"At 10 P.M., M. Tristan, man of letters, will relate his early amours. M. Alexandre Schaunard will accompany him on the piano.

"At 10.30 P.M., second reading of the paper on 'The Abolition of the Penalty in Tragedy.'

"At 11 P.M., a foreign Prince will describe a Cassowary hunt.

PART II.

"At midnight, Monsieur Marcel, historical painter, blindfolded, will improvise in chalk the meeting of Napoleon and Voltaire in the Elysian Fields. Monsieur Rodolphe will improvise a comparison between the author of 'Zaïre' and the author of 'Austerlitz.'

"At 12.30 P.M., M. Gustave, in a decent undress will imitate the athletic games of the fourth Olympiad.

"At 1 A.M., third reading of the paper on the 'Abolition of the Penalty in Tragedy,' and collection for the tragic authors who will one day be out of work.

"At 2 A.M., beginning of the games and organisation of the dances, which will be continued until morning.

"At 6 A.M., sunrise and final chorus.

"During the whole of the entertainment the ventilators will play.

"N.B.—Any person wishing to read or recite verses will be immediately turned out and delivered up to the police. You are requested not to take away the candle ends."

Let me tell you briefly the origin of the entertainment that so vastly dazzled the Bohemian world of Paris. For about a year Marcel and Rodolphe had gone on announcing this magnificent entertainment to take place *always* next Saturday. But untoward circumstances had forced them to let the promise extend over fifty-two weeks. In consequence, they could scarcely move a step without having to endure the jeers of their friends, some of whom were actually unfeeling enough to formulate loud complaints. The affair began to get tiresome, and the two friends determined to put an end to it by liquidating the engagements they had made. And the invitation quoted above was the outcome of that decision.

"Now," said Rodolphe, "there's no possibility of retreat; we've burnt our ships, and we've just a week in which to find the hundred francs indispensable for doing the thing well."

"As they are so absolutely necessary," said Marcel, "of course they'll be forthcoming."

And with an insolent confidence in luck, the two friends went to sleep, convinced that the hundred francs were already on the road—the road of the impossible.

However, two days before the evening appointed for the party, as nothing had arrived, Rodolphe thought that if he did not wish to be disgraced when the time came for the guests to arrive, it would probably be safer to assist luck. In order to facilitate matters, the two friends, by degrees, modified the sumptuous programme on which they had at first determined.

And from modification to modification, after greatly

curtailing the item cakes, and carefully revising and diminishing that of drinks, the total expense was reduced to fifteen francs.

The problem was thus simplified but not solved.

"Well," said Rodolphe, "we must take strong measures; we can't postpone it again this time."

"Impossible," said Marcel.

"How long is it since I heard the story of Studzianka?"

"Almost two months."

"Two months, good! that's a respectable interval. My uncle shall have no cause for complaint. To-morrow I'll go and see him, and ask for the battle of Studzianka. That will mean five francs."

"And," said Marcel, "I'll sell old Medicis *A Deserted Manor*; that will be another five francs. If I've time to put in three towers and a mill, it will very likely be ten francs, and then we shall have just the sum required."

The two friends went to sleep, and dreamed that the Princess Belgioso asked them to change their reception days in order not to deprive her of her habitual guests.

Marcel got up very early, took a canvas, and diligently proceeded to construct *A Deserted Castle*, an article in great demand by a broker in the Place du Carrousel. Rodolphe went to call on his uncle Monetti, who excelled in narrating the retreat from Moscow. Rodolphe, when things went badly with him, procured his uncle the satisfaction of fighting his campaigns over again some five or six times a year, in consideration for a loan. If you showed a proper enthusiasm for his stories, the veteran stovemaker and chimney-doctor was not unwilling to make it.

About two o'clock, Marcel, with downcast look, carrying a canvas under his arm, met Rodolphe in the Place du Carrousel coming from his uncle's—his appearance also betokened ill news.

"Well," asked Marcel, "what luck?"

"None. My uncle had gone to the Versailles Museum. And you?"

"That wretch of a Medicis doesn't want any more *Ruined Castles*. He asked for a *Bombardment of Tangiers*."

"Our reputation's gone if we don't give the entertainment," grumbled Rodolphe. "What will my friend, the influential critic, think, if I make him put on a white tie and light gloves for nothing?"

They returned to the studio, a prey to the liveliest anxiety.

At that moment a neighbour's clock struck four.

"We've only three hours left," said Rodolphe.

"Well," exclaimed Marcel, going up to his friend, "are you perfectly sure there's no money to be found here?"

"Neither here nor elsewhere. Where could we have left any?"

"Let us search in the stuffing of the chairs. It is said that the *émigrés* hid their treasure in Robespierre's time. Our arm-chair may have belonged to an *émigré*. It's so hard that I've often thought it must be metal inside. Will you make an autopsy of it?"

"This is a mere farce," replied Rodolphe, in a tone at once severe and indulgent.

Suddenly Marcel, who had been prosecuting his search in every corner of the studio, gave a loud shout of triumph.

"We are saved," he exclaimed. "I felt sure there was something of value here. Look!" and he held up for Rodolphe's inspection a coin the size of a crown, half smothered in rust and verdigris.

It was a Carlovingian coin of some artistic value.

"That's only worth thirty sous," said Rodolphe, throwing a contemptuous glance at his friend's findings.

"Thirty sous well laid out will go a long way," said Marcel. "I'll sell this Charlemagne crown to old Father Medicis. Isn't there anything else here I could sell?"

Yes, suppose I take the Russian drum-major's tibia. That will add to the collection."

"Away with the tibia. But it's exceedingly annoying; there won't be a single object of art left."

During Marcel's absence, Rodolphe, feeling certain that his party would come off somehow, went in search of his friend Colline, who lived quite near.

"I want you," he said, "to do me a favour. As master of the house, I must wear a dress-coat, and I haven't got one. Lend me yours."

"But," objected Colline, "as a guest I must wear my dress-coat myself."

"I'll allow you to come in a frock coat."

"You know I've never had a frock coat."

"Well, then, the matter can be arranged like this. You needn't come to the party, and you can lend me your dress-coat."

"But that'll never do. I'm on the programme. I can't stay away."

"There'll be plenty of other things lacking," said Rodolphe. "Lend me the dress-coat, and if you want to come, come as you are, in your shirt sleeves."

"Oh, no," said Colline, getting red. "I'll put on my great-coat. But it's all exceedingly annoying." And perceiving that Rodolphe had already laid hold of the dress-coat, he exclaimed—

"Stay, there are one or two little things in the pockets."

Colline's coat deserves mention. First it was blue, and it was purely from habit that Colline talked about his black coat, and as he was the only member of the band who possessed such a garment, his friends were likewise accustomed to say when speaking of the philosopher, Colline's black coat. Further, that celebrated article of apparel had a particular shape of its own, the most eccentric that can be imagined. The abnormally long tails fastened to a very

short waist possessed two pockets, veritable abysses in which Colline was accustomed to put about thirty books he everlastingly carried about him. Thus it was said that when the libraries were closed, scholars and literary men looked up their references in the tails of Colline's coat, a library always open to readers.

When Rodolphe returned he found Marcel playing quoits with five franc pieces to the number of three.

He had sold the coin for fifteen francs.

The two friends immediately began their preparations. They put the studio tidy, and lighted a fire in the stove. A canvas frame, ornamented with candles, was suspended from the ceiling, and did duty as a chandelier. A desk was placed in the middle of the studio, to serve as a tribune for the speakers. In front they put the one arm-chair, which was to be occupied by the influential critic, and laid out on a table the books, novels, *feuilletons* of the authors who were to honour the entertainment with their presence. To avoid any collision between the different parties of men of letters, they divided the studio into four compartments; at the entrance were four hastily manufactured placards inscribed—

POETS.

ROMANTIC.

PROSE-WRITERS.

CLASSICAL.

The ladies were to occupy a space reserved in the middle.

"Oh!" said Rodolphe, "there are no chairs."

"There are plenty on the landing," replied Marcel. "Suppose we take those."

"Of course," said Rodolphe, and proceeded calmly to take possession of his neighbours' property.

Six o'clock struck. The two friends went out for a hasty dinner, and on their return proceeded to light up the

rooms. They could not help feeling dazzled themselves. At seven o'clock Schaunard arrived, accompanied by three ladies, who had forgotten their diamonds and their bonnets. Numerous steps were heard on the staircase. The guests were arriving, and they seemed surprised to find a fire in the stove.

Rodolphe's dress-coat went to meet the ladies, and kissed their hands with a grace worthy of the regency. When there were about twenty persons present, Schaunard asked if they couldn't have something to drink.

"Presently," said Marcel; "we are waiting for the influential critic before we begin on the punch."

By eight o'clock all the guests had come, and they commenced the programme. Between each number came a round of some sort of drink, but what it exactly was has never transpired.

About ten o'clock the white waistcoat of the influential critic appeared. He only stayed an hour, and was very sparing of praise. At midnight, as it was very cold and there was no more fuel, the guests who were seated drew lots for throwing their chairs into the fire.

At one o'clock everybody was standing.

The greatest merriment held sway among the guests, and the memorable evening was the talk of the neighbourhood for a week.

Henry Murger.

MY WEDDING JOURNEY.

WHEN we were alone in the carriage, he took a little bag I was carrying on my arm, and hung it on the ivory button that served to fasten the blind.

"Thank you, the bag wasn't in my way," I observed.

"Yes, yes, I saw that it was very much in your way.

I've a passion for making other people comfortable as well as myself. I hope my stick isn't in your way?"

Doubtless he was waiting until the carriage started to speak to me of his love, and all this fuss was merely put on; I easily guessed that was it. And besides I felt quite as embarrassed as he did.

Then he leaned over, with the intention of putting up the window which was down on my side.

"I don't want you to catch cold," he said.

He pulled at the strap with all his might, leaning over me so as to touch my face with his elbow.

"Thank you, I'm not frightened of the air; it's very pleasant."

"You don't know how serious a draught is; sometimes it's fatal."

And he kept on pulling, biting his lower lip like a man making some great effort.

"What the deuce is the matter with your window?" he asked the coachman, who was just going to get up on the box.

"Only that you don't understand how to do it," he replied rudely.

And with all the ease in the world, by a touch of the fingers, the coachman put up the glass.

Monsieur Laumel sat down again, grumbling. "Insolent fellow! they are all alike! If only there was time I'd teach him his business." The coachman was, however, very fat. "Five minutes to five! the train goes at a quarter past. Coachman, my good man, drive quickly, quickly! You haven't forgotten anything; your trunks are properly locked?" he added with a smile.

"Everything is right, thank you!"

My heart was so full at that moment! I would have given a year of my life for a pressure of the hand, and—well! yes, for a kiss.

"Ah! girls! girls! they rely a little too much on their maids in those matters. I mean, in general, of course. Past five! This carriage goes like a plough."

He blew his nose, carefully rolled his handkerchief into a ball, and continued: "I must tell you that I always pack my trunk myself."

"Ah! indeed!"

"Yes, truly. And if I had five hundred thousand a year I should do the same. So you see, my dear little wife, that'll be one thing less for you to look after. Five minutes past five! I have my little ways. I put my shirts at the bottom, on the left; my toilet things always on top. I could find everything blindfold. You'll see how well we shall get on together, my dear Adèle! I'm very easy to live with, especially with those I love."

I shivered a little; he was going to touch on the wished-for subject, and all this preamble had not been so foolish.

"I detest," he continued, "everything complicated. Stews, confectionery. Don't you prefer roast meat? To my taste, there's nothing else of consequence in a meal. Thus the luncheon just now was execrable. Perhaps you didn't notice what I ate?"

"No," I replied, "I did not."

"You were a little confused! Don't trouble about it, with care it'll be all right. But I noticed that you left two or three slices of duck on your plate. I hate any one to leave things on their plate. It's always a sign of affectation. But there, any one would think I was scolding you. Eight minutes past five! At last! Here we are! Don't trouble about anything; wait for me in the luggage-office. I'll see to everything. Two trunks—good; a bag, three. Adèle, you've forgotten the umbrellas. Ah! no, I beg your pardon. Be quick, my good man; I'm going to take the tickets. That's all right. A tip! a tip! I'm not

obliged to give you one, do you understand? Adèle, your little bag? There's twenty centimes, and be off!"

As soon as we were settled in the train, he took off his hat, drew from his bag a little silk cap, and carefully and methodically put it on his head.

I looked at him. We were alone in the carriage, and I felt agitated. I took my gloves on and off; I cast about for something to say, but found nothing; and yet, in spite of this embarrassment, I was not unhappy. My heart beat wildly. What will he say? Here we are alone. It seemed to me that at the first loving word I should burst into tears, and fall into his arms.

"Two francs, ten centimes excess," he remarked, looking at me with an apology of a smile; "would you have thought it?"

"It's enormous!"

"So I should think; and as I have kept my bag with me, that's so much gained. In Germany that wouldn't be allowed. They're exceedingly strict about luggage in Germany. The Count de Marsil—you know him?"

"Yes, yes, I know him. You were saying——?"

"He's the most delightful fellow, the best companion!"

"He seems very nice."

"Ah! yes. But you can't appreciate him! You've only met him in society, and he probably seemed bombastic, cold. If you knew him as I know him! He's such an amusing fellow!"

"You were saying that in Germany——"

"We were very intimate, and he told me that travelling once in Germany, and getting tired of having continually to look after his luggage, he sent it all back to Paris, and continued his tour, buying as he went along the linen and clothes he needed. Now that folly just describes him. It is true that his immense fortune allows him those sorts of jokes. You're not cold? He is an artist! Heavens!"

how I've laughed at him ; he takes anything from me. I'm so afraid you're cold ? ”

“ Thank you, you are very kind.”

And thus we reached Orleans.

Gustave Droz (1832).

MY WIFE GOES TO THE BALL.

Madame. Ah ! how nice of you to come home so early !
(*Looking at the clock.*) A quarter to six. But how cold you are, my dear ; your hands are frozen ! Come and sit by the fire. (*She puts a lump of coal on the fire.*) I've been thinking of you all day. It's cruel that you should have to go out in such weather ! Has everything gone right ? Are you satisfied ?

Monsieur. Perfectly satisfied, my darling. (*Aside.*) I've never seen my wife so amiable. (*Aloud, taking the bellows.*) Perfectly satisfied, perfectly satisfied, and I've such an appetite ! Has baby been good ?

Mme. You're hungry ! That's capital ! Bravo ! (*Calling.*) Marie, tell cook the master would like dinner early. Don't forget what I told you, and a lemon.

Mons. Mysteries ?

Mme. Yes, Monsieur ; I've got a little surprise for you. I flatter myself that you'll be charmed with it.

Mons. Tell me what it is.

Mme. Oh ! it's a real surprise. How inquisitive you are ! Your eyes glitter already. What if I don't tell you ?

Mons. Oh ! I should break my heart.

Mme. Come then, I won't tease you. You are to have fresh oysters and a young partridge for dinner to-night. Now, don't you love me ?

Mons. Oysters and a partridge ! You're an angel. (*He kisses her.*) An angel ! (*Aside.*) What the deuce is the

matter with my wife? (*Aloud.*) Have you had any visitors to-day?

Mme. I saw Ernestine this morning, but she only just came in and out. She has had to send her maid away. Would you believe it, the girl was seen the evening before

"YOU ARE TO HAVE FRESH OYSTERS AND A YOUNG PARTRIDGE FOR DINNER
TO-NIGHT. NOW, DON'T YOU LOVE ME?"

last dressed as a man, and in her master's clothes? It's too much!

Mons. That's what it is to have confidential servants. And you've only seen Ernestine?

Mme. Yes, and quite enough too. (*With an exclama-*

tion.) How stupid I am! I forgot I had a visit from Madame de Lyr.

Mons. God bless her! Does she still laugh askew in order to hide her discoloured tooth?

Mme. How naughty you are! But she's very fond of you. Poor woman! I was really touched by her visit. She came to remind me that her—— You will be cross. (*She kisses him, and sits down very close to him.*)

Mons. I shall be cross, I shall be cross—I'm not a Turk! Tell me what's it all about?

Mme. But remember the oysters and partridge. Let's go in to dinner. I won't tell you. You're in a bad temper already. Besides, I almost told her that we shouldn't go.

Mons. (*lifting up his arms*). Ah! I knew it! Let her and her tea-party go to Jericho. What have I done to her, then?

Mme. She means to give you pleasure. She's a delightful friend. I like her, because she always speaks so well of you. If you had been hidden in the cupboard during her visit you wouldn't have been able to help blushing. (*Monsieur shrugs his shoulders.*) Your husband is so amiable, she said; so lively, so witty. Try to bring him; it's a privilege to have him. I replied, certainly, but without any meaning, you know. Oh! I've not the least wish to go. It's not particularly amusing at Madame de Lyr's. Her rooms are filled with a crowd of dull people. I know they're very influential, and might be useful, but what's that to me? Let's go in to dinner. There's still one bottle of that famous Pomard; I kept it to wash down your partridge. You can't think how I love to see you eat a partridge. You consume it with such unction. You're a bit of a *gourmand*, you know. (*She takes his arm.*) Come, dearest, I hear your little rascal of a son getting impatient in the dining-room.

Mons. (*gravely*). Hum! and when is it?

Mme. When is what?

Mons. Why, the tea-party.

Mme. Ah! the ball, you mean—I hadn't given it another thought—Madame de Lyr's ball? Why do you ask, since we're not going? Let's make haste; the dinner will be getting cold. It's to-night.

Mons. (stopping suddenly). What! the party is a ball, and the ball is to-night! But, hang it, a ball isn't thrown at your head in that sort of fashion. You are informed beforehand.

Mme. Of course she sent us an invitation a week ago. I don't know what became of the card. I forgot to show it you. It was very wrong of me.

Mons. You forgot, you forgot.

Mme. And a good thing I did. You'd have been sulky all the week. Let's begin dinner.

(They sit down; the table-cloth is white, the silver glitters, the oysters are fresh, and the partridge, done to a turn, gives forth a delicious smell. Madame is charming, and laughs at anything. Monsieur becomes more and more good-tempered, and lolls back in his chair.)

Mons. But come, tell me (*pouring out some wine*), you haven't your gown ready?

Mme. (with innocent astonishment). What gown, dearest?

Mons. Why, for Madame de Lyr's.

Mme. For the ball! What a memory you have! You're still thinking of it? No, I haven't; ah! yes, I have my tarlatan gown; a woman can so easily manufacture a ball-gown.

Mons. And the hairdresser isn't ordered.

Mme. That's true, he's not ordered; and besides, I've not the least desire to go to the ball. We shall settle in cosily by the fire, read a little, and go to bed early. Ah! I

just recollect that as she went away Madame de Lyr said, "Your hairdresser is the same as mine; I shall order him for you." And I was so stupid I didn't answer. But it's not far, I can send Marie to countermand him.

Mons. Since he is ordered, this miserable wig-maker, let him come, and let us—amuse ourselves a little at worthy Mme. de Lyr's, but on one condition. I must find everything laid out ready on the bed—gloves, coat, and you must tie my white cravat.

Mme. Done! (*She kisses him.*) You're the best of husbands. I'm delighted, darling, because I know you are sacrificing yourself to give me pleasure, although I'm utterly indifferent to the ball itself. In all sincerity I haven't the least wish to go.

(Madame is ready; the style of her hair suits her perfectly; she smiles at herself in the glass as she draws her long gloves over her rings.)

(Monsieur has had difficulties with his tie, and pulled off three buttons. He looks very cross.)

Mons. Come along, let us go down; the carriage is waiting. It's a quarter past eleven. (*Aside.*) Another night without sleep. Whip up, coachman, 224 Rue de la Pépinière.

(They reach their destination. The Rue de la Pépinière seems in great commotion. Policemen push their way through the crowd. In the distance confused shouts, and the sound of approaching wheels are heard. Monsieur leans out of the window.)

Mons. What's the matter, John?

The Coachman. It's a fire, sir; the firemen have just arrived.

Mons. All the same, drive us to 224.

Coach. We are there, sir; that's where the fire is.

The Concierge (pushes his way through the crowd and approaches the carriage). Doubtless, like everybody, Monsieur, you are coming to Mme. de Lyr's. She's dreadfully sorry, but her house is on fire. She cannot possibly receive her friends.

Mme. (excitedly). It's scandalous.

Mons. (humming). How distressing! how heart-rending! *(To the coachman).* Home, as quickly as possible. I'm fearfully sleepy. *(He settles himself comfortably in the carriage and turns up his collar. Aside.)* Anyhow, I gained a well-cooked partridge.

Gustave Droz.

A SUPPER AT MY WIFE'S.

IT was Christmas Eve. The weather was frightfully cold, snow was falling in large flakes, which, blown by the wind, struck against the window-panes. The passers-by, enveloped in wraps, walked at a swift pace past the houses, bending their heads to the fury of the blast.

But I, in my dressing-gown, drumming with my fingers on the window-panes, I smiled at the frozen pedestrians, I smiled at the frost, I smiled at the snow, with the contentment of a man who is sitting by the fire in a warm room, with comfortable flannel-lined slippers on his feet, and a thick carpet under them. My wife was cutting and snipping a large piece of linen, and now and again she smiled at me. A new book was awaiting me on the mantelpiece, and the coal in the grate made a hissing noise and gave out the little blue flames that

"IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE."

make poking the fire so tempting.

"How foolish it is of people to go tramping through the snow, isn't it?" I said to my wife.

"Ssh!" she replied, putting down the scissors she held in her hand; and after rubbing her chin gently with her soft, pink, dimpled fingers, she went on examining the pieces of linen she had just cut.

"I say that it's absurd to go out in the cold when it's so easy to stay by the fire."

"Ssh!"

"What on earth are you doing that's so important?"

"I'm—I'm cutting out a pair of braces for you," and she went on with her work. But as in cutting out she bent her head, passing behind her I saw the back of her soft, white neck, visible that evening because she had arranged her hair higher than usual. I went nearer to get a better view, and—I kissed the back of my wife's neck.

"Monsieur," said Louise, suddenly raising her head.

"Madame," I replied; and we both went off into a great fit of laughter.

"Well, it's Christmas Eve."

"Are you apologising?"

"Are you annoyed?"

"Yes, I am annoyed that Christmas Eve should not move you more. It would seem that you've quite forgotten your childish days."

"Now, my darling, do you want me to hang up my stockings when I go to bed to-night? Of course I've not forgotten all those things, but so much has happened since. Other pleasures have effaced those."

"Yes, I understand, the pleasures of your bachelor days. I'm positive this is the first Christmas Eve you ever spent by the fireside in dressing-gown and slippers, and without a supper. For you had supper——"

"I had supper,—I had supper——"

"Yes, I bet anything you had supper."

"Oh! once or twice I may have had supper—I don't exactly remember—with intimate friends, you know—a penn'orth of chestnuts."

"And a glass of sugared water."

"Very likely. It was all very simple, and it seems so long ago. We chatted a bit, and then went to bed."

"And he says that without a smile! You've never told me anything about those simple pleasures."

"But, my dearest, what I tell you is perfectly true. I recollect, however, that once it was fairly lively. It was at Ernest's, and he played to us——"

"Give me that lump of coal—but no, never mind, it's nearly midnight, a time when all sensible persons—— (*Jumping up and throwing her arms round my neck.*) Well, I don't mean to be sensible, and I intend to wipe out the memories of chestnuts and glasses of sugared water?" And pushing me into my study, she shut and locked the door.

"But, my darling, whatever's the matter with you?" I called through the door.

"Give me ten minutes, no more. Your newspaper's on the mantelpiece; you haven't read it this evening. The matches are in the corner."

I heard the sound of plates and dishes, and the rustle of some silken stuff. Has my wife taken leave of her senses?

Louise soon opened the door.

"Don't be angry with me for locking you out," she said, kissing me. "Look how smart I've made myself. Don't you recognise the style of hair you like best, arranged high, showing the neck? And since my poor neck is exceedingly shy, it would never have consented to expose itself thus if I hadn't encouraged it by putting on a low bodice. And then it's the right thing to wear full dress when you take supper with the authorities."

"Supper?"

"Of course. Don't you see my grand illumination, the table with flowers and heaps of good things? I had it all ready in the recess, but in order to drag it to the fire, and to dress myself, I had to be alone. There's some nice old Chambertin. Come, let's sit down. I'm as hungry as a hunter. May I give you a wing of cold chicken?"

"Your idea is delightful, darling; but really I'm embarrassed—I'm in my dressing-gown."

"Well, Monsieur, take it off, if it's in your way, but don't leave this piece of chicken on my hands. I'm going to wait on you myself," and getting up, she threw her table-napkin over her arm, and turned up her sleeve to the elbow.

"That's how the waiters in the restaurants do it, isn't it?"

"Exactly. But, waiter, pray allow me to kiss your hand."

"I haven't time," she replied, laughing, and boldly putting the corkscrew into the neck of the bottle. "Chambertin's a pretty name; and do you remember that before my marriage—good gracious, how tight the cork is in!—you told me that you liked it because of a poem by Alfred de Musset—which, by-the-bye, you've never let me read. Look at the two Bohemian wine-glasses I bought purposely for to-night! We're going to drink each other's healths out of them."

"And his, eh?"

"That of our heir, of course, dear little love of an heir! Then I shall put the glasses away till the same occasion next year. Eh, dearest? They shall be our supper glasses. Every year we'll have supper like this, by the fire, opposite each other—even unto our most remote old age."

"But, my darling, when all our teeth are gone?"

"Well, then we must have soup, and it'll be very nice all the same. Give me some more, please, with jelly. (*Lifting*

her glass.) Here's to our golden wedding." (*Her husband kisses her.*)

"Oh! take care, you'll break my glass, the fruit of all my savings. You always do some sort of mischief whenever you kiss me. Do you remember how you tore my gown, a day or two before our wedding, at Madame de Brill's ball, when we were valseing in the small drawing-room?"

"But it's so difficult to do two things at once—to dance in time and kiss one's partner."

"You're keeping all the truffles for yourself. Oh! not quite full; I mustn't get tipsy. Of course if we weren't married it might happen."

"It's two o'clock already, husband mine; the fire is out, and I'm just a little—now don't laugh—just a little dizzy."

"But it was a famous pie, wasn't it?"

"A famous pie, yes. Don't you think we'd better have tea for breakfast to-morrow?"

Gustave Droz.

MODERN JOURNALISM.

(A FRAGMENT.)

LISTEN to the colloquy, strange and apparently paradoxical (although the most incontestable of realisms), which took place recently between the editor of one of our modern newspapers and a young friend of ours, who, out of curiosity, disguised himself as an aspirant to journalism.

Let us penetrate into the office where the editor—one of those men who regard the respectable public as so much “subscribable matter”—is seated at his table, one elbow supported by the arm of his chair, chin in hand, in seeming meditation, the other hand idly playing with the traditional ivory paper-knife.

The office boy appears : he hands the dreamer a card.

He takes it, glances at it in an absent way, then lifts his restless brows, and with a slight start, pulling himself together, murmurs—

“Unknown ! pooh ! Some boaster who has made a bet that he would gain access to me. Nowadays everybody is known to the whole world. And what does this gentleman look like ? ”

“He’s a young man, sir.”

“The devil he is ! Show him in.”

The next moment our young friend appears.

The editor rises, and in his most prepossessing manner murmurs—

“Have I really the honour of speaking to a man who is unknown ? ”

“Otherwise I should never have dared to present myself,” replies the pretended penman.

"Pray take a seat."

"I bring you just a brief account of a thing that actually happened—a little embroidered, naturally——"

"Of course, of course. Let us come to the point. What is your price per line?"

"From three to three and a half francs. Isn't that about it?" gravely replies the neophyte.

The manager starts.

"But, I assure you, Montépin, Hugo even, Du Terrail in fact, cannot command that rate," he replies.

The young man rises, and says coldly: "The editor forgets that I am TO-TAL-LY unknown."

A silence.

"Pray sit down again. Business isn't settled like that. I don't say that, as things go at present, an unknown writer isn't a *rara avis*. However——"

"I may add, sir," interpolates the aspiring author, "that I haven't the least suspicion of talent, that, indeed, my want of talent is quite colossal! I am what the language of society calls a fool. I know something of English and Irish prize-rings, but as for literature, I solemnly declare that it is for me a seven times sealed document."

"What!" cries the editor, ~~trembling with~~ joy, "you think you can do anything ~~without~~ literary talent. What a piece of presumption!"

"I am quite ~~prepared~~ to prove my incapacity in that respect."

"Impossible! Alas, you are merely boasting," murmurs the editor, his most secret hopes evidently roused.

"I am," continued the stranger with a sweet smile, "what is called a dull and conceited scribbler, endowed with a stupidity of ideas and a triviality of style of the first order, a pre-eminently trite pen."

"You! What nonsense! If it were only true!"

"Sir, I swear——"

"Rubbish!" replies the editor with tears in his eyes, and a melancholy smile.

Then looking at the young man with emotion—

"Yes, that's youth all over, youth which sticks at nothing. Sacred fire! Illusions! at the first stroke you think you're a success! No talent, do you say? But you must know, sir, that in these days a man must be extremely remarkable to have no talent! A distinguished man! It's often only after fifty years of struggle, toil, humiliation, and misery that you do succeed in becoming one of them, and even then you're only a *parvenu*. And, sir, do you know that I've been looking for a man WITHOUT TALENT for the last twelve years? Do you understand? And I have not found even one. I've spent more than half a million on this wild-goose chase. I embarked on the enterprise without due reflection. What would you have? I was young, ingenuous. I ruined myself, for now every one has talent, my dear sir, you with the rest of them. Don't let us overestimate ourselves. Trust me, it's no use. It's a played-out game, a trick that no longer takes the public. Let's be reasonable."

"Sir, such suspicions are unworthy of you. If I had talent I shouldn't be here."

"And where would you be, then?"

"Looking more carefully after my interests, I beg you to believe."

"*Unknown and without a suspicion of talent*, you say? I can't believe it. Your fortune would be made, and mine too. I could offer you six francs a line. Look here, between ourselves, who will guarantee the nullity of this article?"

"Read it, sir," proudly articulated the young aspirant.

"It's easy to see that you're exceedingly unsophisticated," replied the manager, smiling. "We only read what

we determine never to publish. We only print properly illegible copy. And, with the aid of my glasses, I see that yours seems to be tainted with some caligraphy—of itself a sufficiently bad omen. It would raise the suspicion that you take pains with what you do, while every journalist really worthy of that great title ought only to dash things off his pen, just anything that comes into his head, and above all, he should never read it over. And his opinions should be only due to the humour of the moment and the views of his newspaper. We haven't leisure enough, my dear sir, to think over what we say while the newspaper train is waiting, that's self-evident. The subscribers must imagine they're reading something, you see, and it's all the same to them whether you know anything or not."

"Be assured, sir, I had it copied."

"You have your things copied ; you're joking."

"My copy was not only illegible, but full of such faults in spelling and grammar that I thought for a first article——"

"All the more reason why you should have brought it to me as it was ! The diamond will never know its own value. Faults in spelling and grammar ! But that's just what takes your true connoisseurs. The public like blunders, sir ; it flatters them to find them out, especially in the provinces. You were very wrong. And have you submitted this article to an expert ?"

"Shall I confess to you, sir. Doubting myself, for thank God I've no genius——"

"Confound it, I hope not," interrupts the editor.

The editor at last reads the MS.

"Ah !" he groaned, sighing deeply, "I was sure of it. Another disappointment ; but I've left off counting them."

"What do you say ?" murmured the young hero, as if in terror.

"Alas, my noble sir, but it's full of talent. I'm sorry to be

obliged to tell you so. It's worth three sous a line, and that only while you're unknown. If I insert it, in a week it'll be worth nothing, and in a fortnight it'll be you who'll pay me, unless you adopt a pseudonym. Unfortunately, since you possess just the talent that makes you—pardon the term—an author, you can never be a journalist. If you are an author, you are the born enemy of every newspaper. Your sentences have that indescribable turn that shows you are seeking to dissimulate your intelligence in order not to alarm your readers. And people don't like to be humiliated. You take the public for fools, perhaps. Not at all; they are only endowed with a different sort of intelligence from yourself.

Villiers de L'Isle-Adam.

MONSIEUR TRINGLE.

NEVER was there a happier man than Monsieur Tringle the day he received an invitation to Madame Brou's fancy-dress ball.

M. Tringle lost no time in deciding that he would wear a Mephistopheles costume.

M. Tringle was a bachelor, and desiring to become the possessor of Mdlle. Brou, or rather of her dowry, determined to put his fate to the touch on the night of the ball. After dressing at the barber's, who lent the costume on hire, and who greatly admired the fine effect, M. Tringle started in all impatience for the scene of action.

"Your cloak, Monsieur Tringle," cried the barber. "It's cold, I warn you."

But the bachelor was already bounding along the streets, rehearsing as he went a *pas de diable* he had just thought out.

He rang the bell.

A slight noise was heard inside, and Mdlle. Brou herself opened the door.

"Mademoiselle," said M. Tringle, bending double, so that his tail, starting upwards, was at great pains to be exquisitely polite.

As a rule, Mdlle. Brou's face was entirely expressionless, and somewhat resembled a milliner's block looking at the passing of a troop of cavalry from the shop-window. But now she looked immensely astonished.

"Is your mother quite well?" asked M. Tringle, with a further access of affability.

At the same time he entered the hall, and found himself at the dining-room door, where Madame Brou, surrounded by a heap of various stuffs, was sitting at a table lighted by a lamp.

Not without annoyance did M. Tringle say to himself, "I'm too early."

However, he greeted Madame Brou none the less respectfully, and she, glancing aside under her glasses, looked with tightened lips at the extraordinary being who solicited the favour of paying her his compliments.

Mdlle. Brou was sitting by her mother, and the two ladies communicated their impressions in dumb show by such looks of astonishment that at first M. Tringle thought some damage must have occurred to his fine devil's costume during his progress along the streets.

An ominous silence followed the awkward arrival, M. Tringle feeling seriously annoyed with himself for coming so early.

"I beg your pardon," said Madame Brou, making visible efforts to enter into conversation.

"Madame——," but in great confusion M. Tringle said no more. Though his eyes were cast down, he felt Madame Brou looking at him from head to foot, from the

hoofs to the wig. Uneasy as a soldier before a severe colonel, he asked, "Am I all right?"

Madame Brou, looking at her daughter as if for advice

"'IS YOUR MOTHER QUITE WELL?' ASKED M. TRINGLE, WITH A FURTHER
ACCESS OF AFFABILITY."

before opening fire, said, "At the first glance I do not recognise you, Monsieur."

This caused M. Tringle to break into uncontrollable fits of laughter.

The effect he desired was obtained !

But the bachelor perceived that Madame Brou did not share his merriment.

The ladies' lips tightened. With a sign full of dignity, Madame Brou motioned her daughter to sit up.

They might have been judges about to pronounce sentence.

"What, ladies, don't you recognise me?" asked M. Tringle, proud of his disguise.

"The ladies are late with their costumes," M. Tringle ventured to say.

But as they did not vouchsafe a reply, the bachelor began to feel annoyed, and to think that for these sorts of entertainments the time ought to be printed on the invitation.

"It's very comfortable here, ladies," he ventured to remark.

Internally the bachelor was hoping to taste some of the refreshments of the evening, for the fatigues of the way had made him exceptionally thirsty.

The ladies did not seem to understand him in the least, and M. Tringle was surprised at the unconcern of the lady of the house, who, at that hour, should surely have been preparing the cakes, lemonade, and punch.

"If only some other mask would arrive!" said M. Tringle to himself; "a new costume would take their attention off me."

But the guests did not hurry themselves.

M. Tringle attempted to put some life into the conversation. "Every one is saying, Madame, that your ball will be the most brilliant of the season."

Once again the scissors stopped, and Madame Brou looked at M. Tringle from top to toe.

"Certainly," thought the bachelor, "some unseemly rent must be visible on my person." Aloud, he observed, "The ladies are, doubtless, putting the finishing touches to their dresses." And he expressed his regret that he was not already able to admire the ladies in the full glory of their costumes.

"What's the use of dressing a week before the ball?" said Mdle. Brou.

"A week before the ball?" cried M. Tringle, "ye gods!"

"We are not invited to the ball to which you are going, Monsieur," said Madame Brou, lighting a candle, and rising to show the unhappy joker that his visit had already been too long.

"The ball's not to-night?" replied the bachelor in an agitated voice.

"I have the honour to inform you, Monsieur, that we receive on the 18th."

M. Tringle jumped out of his chair.

"The 18th," he cried. "The invitation was dated February 8th. Ah! poor Tringle!"

"What's that?" asked Madame Brou. "You are Monsieur Tringle. What an unfortunate *contretemps*! I was wondering what curious notion could induce a stranger to call on us in that costume."

To dress up like the devil a week before the ball was unheard of. Could he wear so eccentric a disguise twice?

And M. Tringle made countless efforts to hide the tail behind his chair—the tail on whose tricks he had placed all his hopes; but so supple was the spring, that his efforts were not of much avail. At the least movement the ill-behaved little tuft at its end appeared on

the arms of the chair, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other.

M. Brou now returned home, and showed Tringle the door—for ever.

So saying, M. Brou opened the door, and shut it with a bang on terrified M. Tringle.

Philosophers of all nations agree that a misfortune never comes single. What were M. Tringle's feelings when, on attempting to descend the staircase, he found something pulling him back !

His tail was shut in the door!—in the door of a house whence M. Tringle had just been finally dismissed.

At about 2 A.M. he managed to free himself, and on his way home his devil's disguise led him into many extraordinary adventures.

Champfleury (1821).

MONSIEUR BRETONCEL'S GREAT FIND.

THE well-known stockbroker, Bretoncel, was an amateur of rare curiosities. By that is to be understood curiosities that are not always curious ; but their high price makes the people who acquire them think that they have some resemblance to the Medicis. And so crowding their drawing-rooms till they are like *bric-à-brac* shops, with enamels, Chinese jades, Damascene weapons, and Venetian glass, they regard themselves as patrons of art.

In the autumn, M. Bretoncel took a month's holiday on an estate situated on the banks of the Oise, but he did not waste his time. There, as at Paris, the curiosity mania still possessed him. He traversed the neighbourhood on foot, and objects he would not have looked at at the *Hôtel Drouot*¹ seemed to him marvellous, when he

¹ The official auction rooms in Paris.

himself routed them out. A sportsman who brings back an empty game-bag, kills a hedge-sparrow, has it cooked for breakfast, and finds it better than a wood-cock ; it is the same with a collector.

One day the stockbroker had thus explored the country to the great fatigue of his legs, which were ready to come off. It was five o'clock in the afternoon, M. Bretoncel was returning home, melancholy and empty-handed, when, through the door of a tavern, he saw a dresser filled with coarse plates and dishes. Immediately you might have seen a man standing in front of the entrance, trying to see if some precious object might not be hidden in the gloom.

"Come in, sir," said the landlady, who, seeing a weary man, offered him a chair.

Instead of resting, M. Bretoncel walked round the room, eagerly examined each smoky corner, and at length stopped in front of the mantelshelf, where hung an old strainer.

The stockbroker took it down, turned it over and over, and looked at it in the light. It was a strainer of mediocre interest, save that by an ingenious arrangement the holes formed a name and the date 1749.

"How much will you take for this strainer?" he said.

The landlady did not jump at the offer. The thing had belonged to her grandmother, and she should feel parting with it. But M. Bretoncel insisted, and obtained possession of the strainer for ten francs. He examined it more at his ease, seated under the mantelshelf, rubbing away at the copper to restore its pristine brilliance.

Two peasants were sitting at a table in the tavern before a pot of cider, talking of law-suits, rents, and harvests.

"What does that man want?" one of them asked the landlady, who replied that she had just sold a strainer to a curiosity-hunter for a sum that would enable her to buy a new one, and a pair of chickens into the bargain.

"If that's the case," said the peasant, raising his voice, so that M. Bretoncel might hear, "I've a famous antiquity at home."

Antiquity! the stockbroker pricked up his ears, and asked the peasant what it was.

"I don't exactly know. The children found it in the garret, and a jolly long time it must have been there!"

Garret, long time, are words that take all amateurs.

M. Bretoncel plied the peasant with questions.

"All I know, sir, is that it shines; that there's something like a gilded angel, and writing below."

Shines, writing, gilded angel, added to *garret* and *long time*, furnished information enough to put a man on the track of the precious object.

The stockbroker got up, thought over what he had heard, and, coming no nearer a conclusion, sat down again.

"What does the object represent?"

"Unfortunately, there's no schoolmaster in our neighbourhood, or I would have asked him to decipher the writing."

"Is it a picture?"

"It's a picture without being one. For sure there's metal."

"Metal!" shouted the stockbroker, opening his eyes wide as if to look at the object. "Is it large?"

"Neither large nor small," and thereupon the man got up and put on his satchel.

"You're going already, my fine fellow?"

"I've a league to walk to get home."

"You'll take a glass of wine to help you on your way."

"There's no refusing that, sir."

The bottle on the table, "You say that there's writing and an angel."

"Wait, I remember now, the angel is playing music—with a trumpet."

"A sacred subject," said the stockbroker to himself, "with explanatory legend."

He got up, took down a saucepan, and brought it to the table.

"The thing, then, is about this size?"

"Exactly, saving that the top isn't flat—it bulges out like."

"And, doubtless, it is hollow underneath," replied M. Bretoncel.

"On my word, you talk like a witch."

The stockbroker had much ado to hide his emotion. He breathed with difficulty, his heart beat, his hands shook.

There was no manner of doubt, it must be an enamel. A summary inventory formed itself in the collector's brain. The object was found in a *garret*, where it had lain hidden for a *long time*, according to what the peasant said. Then it is very *old*. It *shines*. An *angel* playing a trumpet is represented with a *gilt legend* round it. The metal is both *concave* and *convex*.

It is assuredly a wonderful enamel coming from an old castle or monastery of the neighbourhood. What glory to drag from obscurity some splendid work of Leonard Limousin, or of Pierre Courtois!

However, all emotion must be concealed, for fear the peasant should perceive it. Those rustic clowns are so artful. He was going to do a good stroke of business. His beating heart told him so.

"Could one get a sight of this ena——? Ahem!" said the stockbroker, violently forcing the last syllable back into his throat.

"Well, sir, a sight of it costs nothing. Whenever you like, you may even have the satisfaction of seeing my brats dine out of it."

"The rascals!" said M. Bretoncel.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Fancy, letting your children play with such a thing!"

"The brats must amuse themselves!"

"But haven't they already spoiled the ena—— Ahem!"

"It's pretty solid, and the varnish protects it."

"Would you be willing to let me have that antiquity?" said the stockbroker.

"I don't say no, sir. It's the children who hold to it most."

"I've half a mind to go with you——"

"With pleasure, sir; it's only a league."

"Madame," said the stockbroker to the landlady, "bring us three glasses of your best brandy."

As it was important to get into the peasant's good graces, Bretoncel drank the brandy, though not without grimaces, and clinked glasses with the man.

They started, but when the peasant had gone a few steps from the door he went back, under pretext of looking for his pipe.

"Without indiscretion, mother," he said to the landlady, "how much did the fellow pay for the strainer?"

"There's the coin," said the woman, drawing the ten francs from her pocket.

"Good," said the peasant. Having lighted his pipe, he returned to his companion with an air of indifference, puffing forth clouds of smoke.

They talked about the children. The stockbroker asked his companion about their age and sex; and as they happened to be just passing the village store, M. Bretoncel begged the man to wait, entered the shop, and came out loaded with dolls, toys, and bags of sweets.

"Why, you're heavily loaded, sir," said the peasant. "The toys 'll be terribly in the way during your walk."

"I'm interested in your little family," replied the stock-

broker. "It will afford me true pleasure to give the children these playthings."

For half-an-hour they conversed on indifferent topics, but from time to time M. Bretoncel returned to the object of his search.

"You're not afraid to let your children eat off copper?"

"But I told you the inside is varnished like the outside."

"It is surely an enamel," said the stockbroker to himself.

In the distance the slate roofs of farm buildings shone through the poplars. The stockbroker's heart expanded.

"That's not our village," said the peasant; "that's only the market town where we get our provisions."

M. Bretoncel heaved a sigh. The parcels began to weigh heavily. But to gain possession dissimulation is necessary, and the stockbroker was careful to conceal his discomfort.

The pedestrians walked through the market-place, where an immense wooden stocking hung out in front of the draper's shop.

"My wife," said the peasant, "asked me to buy her a gown here, but the price of grain was down to-day: it must be left for another time."

This was a direct appeal to the collector's generosity.

"If your wife would like a gown," said M. Bretoncel, "by all means let her have it."

So saying he went into the shop, and pointing to some material, said, "Show me that enamel."

"Enamel!" repeated the astonished shopkeeper.

"Ahem!" said the stockbroker, terrified lest his companion had heard. But the peasant was sitting on the doorstep, reflecting on the lucky chance that had brought about a meeting with such a fine milch cow.

The stuff cut off, M. Bretoncel came out with a fresh parcel under his arm, thinking, "If my friends on the Stock Exchange could see me now." He could not move his arms, walking was a difficult matter; yet the discomfort

and constraint were not without charms. He remembered once meeting the Duke de Coyon-Latour in the streets of Paris carrying on his shoulders an enormous marble bust he had just purchased, and M. Bretoncel said to himself, that in order to walk in the footsteps of such an illustrious collector, he, too, ought to bear the cross of curiosity.

"Have we much farther to go?"

"Half-an-hour more."

"But we've already been walking for two hours."

"Well, I told you it was a good league."

"A good league!" cried M. Bretoncel. For, as a peasant's league generally means two, what might not a *good league* be?

"Now, tell me exactly how long it will take us to reach your house?"

"Well, if we go direct through Quercy, we should get there by supper-time; but I must tell you——" Sureau scratched his head.

"Go on."

"I am forced to make a detour across the fields."

"Across the fields?"

"Doubtless the road is preferable, but in the middle of the village stands the house of a miserable Justice of the Peace, which causes me to shake with anger whenever I pass it. Yet, of course, it shortens the way by a good twenty minutes."

"And that way we must take; come on," said M. Bretoncel.

"But if that miserable judge is at his door, I can't answer for myself. An accident may occur for which you'll reproach yourself all your life."

"What's the matter?"

"To speak the truth, sir, here it is in a couple of words.

I am in arrears with a little account of eighteen francs, and would you believe it, the wretch has me down on his books for six francs five sous interest, although I'm perfectly within my rights. And that's why, to avoid meeting him, I go half a league out of my way every evening."

"Another half league!" said M. Bretoncel. "Go and pay him at once. Here's forty francs."

Night gradually overtook them, but at length, dropping with fatigue and hunger, the stockbroker arrived at the peasant's house. . . . "Show me the object in question."

"Ah, yes. Where is it? The brats will have taken the dish into the field. Wife, go and fetch the antiquity the children play with. This gentleman has come from the town to see it."

The woman stood riveted to the wall.

"I gave it to the pigs," she said.

"An enamel to the pigs!" shouted M. Bretoncel, losing all presence of mind.

"I couldn't find the pigs' trough," said the woman, "so I cut up their potatoes in the dish."

"But they'll have made holes in the enamel with their snouts," said M. Bretoncel.

The woman looked astounded.

"Light the lantern, wife. We'll go to the sty."

The door was open, the pigs grunted. The peasant struck them in order to force them away from the trough.

"There's the antiquity," said the man, throwing away the pieces of potato with which it was filled.

"That!" exclaimed the stockbroker, with a cry of stupefaction.

The greatly coveted enamel was only a *plaque d'assurance*.¹

¹ A *plaque d'assurance* is a plate of copper or brass, bearing the name of the insurance office, affixed to houses insured.

Varnished, decorated with a gilded faun, letters below, convex outside, concave inside, and from those signs M. Bretoncel had inferred that it was a Limoges enamel.

It is on such occasions that amateurs return home, ears down, eyes gloomy, dropping with fatigue, and no illusions to shorten the long walk.

Thus M. Bretoncel made his way back, regretting his presents and gifts.

Champfleury.

HANGED BY CONVICTION.

IN 1786 the prior of the abbey of Epernay was a very shrewd man. Foreseeing the outbreak of the Revolution, he had, at the expense of acts of charity, put by a nice little sum.

The treasure, concealed under goose dripping at the bottom of a pot, was one day discovered by his servant Alfred.

The find so much astonished Alfred that he took it off to his room to make quite sure there was no mistake. He committed two sins—that of theft, and of not profiting by it. Caught, despoiled, and condemned to be hanged, he was sent to the Châtelet in Paris for the ratification of the sentence.

Declared fit for hanging, he was placed in the boot of the stage-coach, under the care of an officer of the military, and set out for Epernay, where the execution was to take place.

On the way he escaped.

Sleeping by day, fleeing by night, the wretched man who thought himself far away, was disagreeably surprised to find

himself, at the end of the fourth night, in the market-place of Epernay, right under the abbey walls.

Day was about to dawn. He determined to hide himself in the very jaws of danger.

He entered the building by a breach he knew. Since childhood he had been familiar with its most remote corners—especially those where no one ever set foot.

Matins were being celebrated.

He stole along to the place where the key of the tower hung, took possession of it, climbed the staircase, and installed himself above the vault of the church.

No one would ever find him there.

Like Robinson Crusoe and his journeys to the wreck, Alfred went out every night in the dark in search of the necessities of life—victuals, linen, furniture, and a few books; in five journeys he completed his arrangements

Then, quite settled, he said, “Now I can live happy till I die.”

The first day he had looked out of the dormer window.

In the market-place he saw the gallows, which seemed to stretch out its arms to him.

“Faugh,” he said, “that sight turns me sick.”

It was a damp, gloomy structure of hideous aspect; at least so it looked to him, for it was raining, the sky was dark, just the sort of weather when everything is hateful.

“Better to die than to be hanged,” he added.

And he shut the window.

At first things went well.

He put his possessions in order.

He killed off a few worms.

In short, he was busy.

He suffered from want of exercise. He dared not stir,

because at the least movement the sound of his footsteps awoke the echoes of the sonorous vault.

It was just a case for the trapeze, but that silent instrument of exercise was lacking.

At length he felt bored.

He needed distraction.

He returned to the window.

The weather had improved.

The gallows looked less sinister.

"Stay," he cried, "it's new, of fine oak."

He noticed the careful workmanship, the solidity.

"And I should have been the first," he added.

He thought of the five hundred criminals following him on that gallows who would soon be forgotten. His name alone would survive, for it marked an epoch, and the inhabitants of Epernay would always have said, "Alfred was the first."

His vanity was aroused.

Posterity!!!

By the time he left the window, if he had not entirely forgiven the gallows, he, any way, consented to look at it.

At first he said, "I shall grow old here." Then he began to hope that one day during the long years to come he might be able to leave his place of refuge.

"Therefore, let us prepare for such a time," he thought.

And he began to learn *The Complete Lawyer's Code* by heart.

On the fourth day, which was Palm Sunday, Alfred woke up late feeling very ill.

The pulses of his head were beating furiously, he could

scarcely see out of his eyes, his brain seemed bursting. He was struck down by that terrible illness called *migraine*.

His sufferings were awful.

He sought their cause.

Below, divine service was being celebrated, and the clouds of incense, mounting to the vault, passing through the crevices, filled his refuge with their heavy perfume.

Horror!

Alfred detested smells—even bad ones.

Then he began to reflect.

“Easter is at the end of April, then comes May, the month of Mary; flowers and incense in profusion. What shall I do?”

He shuddered at the thought of the horrible torture of a six weeks' headache, and murmured, “It is said that hanging is a pleasant sensation.”

His reflections were interrupted by a curious sound, Pschit! pschit! pschit! pschit!

He recognised a mixture of whispers.

It was the prayers of the faithful, which, wafted on clouds of incense, traversed the vault on their way to heaven.

He listened to the prayers as they passed.

What he heard was so base, so disgraceful,—so many evil thoughts concealed in hypocritical words, that he cried: “These are the men who want to hang me.”

He despised the just.

At that moment his betrothed entered.

“She is good,” he said.

He listened to his loved one's prayer as it passed him.

"Lord, if my Alfred is found, let me be present at his last moments !"

"She loves you," his heart whispered.

But she continued: "For it is said that the rope with which a man is hanged brings luck in the choice of a husband."

His last illusion was gone, and suffocated with rage, he went to the window for air.

Nature was in holiday dress.

The gallows looked quite pretty in the bright sunshine.



"THE GALLOWS LOOKED QUITE PRETTY
IN THE BRILLIANT SUNSHINE."

A linnet chirped merrily as he balanced himself on the freshly greased cord.

The gallows had the look of a swing about it, and seemed altogether most attractive.

At its foot stood a man, who, shading his eyes with his hand, was gazing down the Paris road, that looked like a thread of silver along the horizon.

He was the hangman, who was always waiting for his client.

That view refreshed Alfred's spirit.

“At least he’s interested in me,” he thought. “I am not quite alone in the world.”

Then he added: “He studied at Paris. He’d despatch me in ten seconds.”

(Paris has always exercised a certain prestige in the provinces.)

He looked longingly at the gallows, which seemed to say to him: “Ungrateful man!”

But before deciding to yield to its blandishments, Alfred analysed in cold blood the delusive hopes of happiness, for whose sake he had held to life.

They were—

FAMILY.

GLORY.

MONEY.

WOMEN.

POETRY.

GOOD EATING.

He discovered that none of them made life worth living.

Therefore, laying hold of the staircase rail, he went down. He stopped half-way for a last look at the sky.

A small cloud made him fear it would rain in the evening.

He took off his Sunday waistcoat, and went back for his every-day things.

On reaching the market-place he looked for the hangman, his only friend.

He was walking away.

Out of work and with a large family, the poor man was on his way to the pawnbroker’s with his mother’s cross and his father’s banner. For in those days the cross and the banner went hand in hand.

Recognising Alfred : " I had almost given you up," he said with a sweet smile.

The people were coming out of church.

A feeling of contempt for the crowd assembled at the foot of the gallows stirred the criminal.

" Looking at me being hanged makes them all think themselves virtuous," he said to himself.

But as, all said and done, they formed a public, a certain amount of vanity mingled with the feeling.

He was afraid of not dying well.

" Does it hurt ?" he whispered to his friend.

" No, not in the long run."

Climbing the ladder, the hangman, feeling that the occasion demanded some politeness, said : " You're a good fellow. Let me give you a glass of aniseed."

To which Alfred replied : " No, thank you. I'm very fond of it, but it always makes me feel uncomfortable for two days."

Ten seconds later he was strung up.

Eugène Chavette (1827).

THE COWARD WHO BEATS WOMEN.

(Monsieur is waiting for Madame, who has been dining out alone. She comes in at 11 P.M. laughing till the tears run down her cheeks.)

Monsieur. How lively you are to-night, Sylvie ! You must have enjoyed yourself immensely at the Bichards.

Madame (still laughing). You could never guess what makes me laugh like this ?

Mons. Bichard played his old trick of serving the coffee with gold fish swimming in it.

Mme. No. I must tell you without delay. He boxed his wife's ears!

Mons. Impossible!

Mme. A blow of such force that we covered our faces with our table-napkins to deaden the shock to our nerves. Bichard wanted the lamp on the right, because of his bad eye. Aglaé wanted it on the left, to show off her diamonds. Each in turn moved it and put it back again. The sixth time Aglaé in a fury plumped it down right in the middle of a dish of spinach, and so her husband warmed her cheeks for her. (*Laughing.*) I can't stop laughing at Aglaé's face, but in reality I'm extremely angry with Bichard, for the man who beats a woman is a coward.

Mons. Yes, sometimes.

Mme. What? sometimes! You should say always. The man who beats a woman is always, always a coward.

Mons. Unless he is driven to extremity.

Mme. Driven to extremity!!! Do you mean to say that you dare to defend Bichard?

Mons. No, no. I only say that there are circumstances——

Mme. (dryly). Wouldn't it be better to say frankly what's in your mind?

Mons. But there's nothing in my mind.

Mme. You mean by your circumstances that you'd like to appear in the same character.

Mons. (naïvely). I! God forbid! No!

Mme. Why do you smile when you say that?

Mons. I! smile? Deuce take it! I smile for the same reason as you laughed just now, thinking how comical Bichard must——

Mme. Comical? You call his brutality comical? It's pretty evident that men always stand up for each other. At need you'd act just as he did, wouldn't you? Ah! I'm sure the wish isn't wanting.

Mons. What is wanting, then?

Mme. The courage! Of course, I'm not provoking, like Aglaé.

Mons. Oh, no!

Mme. Indeed, "Oh, no!" Is that meant to be ironical? Accusations are of no use here; I must have proofs. And so you dare maintain to my face that I'm provoking, like Aglaé?

Mons. (patiently). No, my dear, I repeat no! But you're a bit of a tease.

Mme. I!!!

Mons. (retracting). Well, suppose that unsaid.

Mme. (dryly). Not at all, go on. You need not pose as a silent victim. And so I'm a tease, am I? You'd find it rather difficult to prove that statement.

Mons. But, my dear, without going further, only this morning you declared that M. Paulin Ménier, the artist, was fair.

Mme. Well, so he is.

Mons. No, I'll take my oath you're wrong; he's dark.

Mme. I tell you he's fair.

Mons. (yielding). Very well, then, he's fair.

Mme. Oh, I'm not to be appeased by ironical concessions. It's easy enough to play at resignation when you don't want to own yourself in the wrong.

Mons. (patiently). Very well, then, I'm wrong.

Mme. You acknowledge it unwillingly. A less obstinate man would say, "My dear wife, I beg your pardon for insisting that Paulin Ménier is dark."

Mons. (losing patience). Yes, yes, yes. But, my dear, that's quite enough. You want Paulin Ménier to be fair; then let him be fair. If you like, let him be green.

Mme. (in a passion). Green! Do you think you're talking to a fool? If you take up that tone, I maintain to your face he's fair.

Mons. (greatly irritated). Of course, he's an albino. Are you satisfied now?

Mme. Your albino proves that you've never seen him, or you would know that he's fair.

Mons. But, the deuce take it, I've already told you twenty times that I know him, and have spoken to him.

Mme. You let him entice you behind the scenes to joke with ballet girls?

Mons. (stamping). Oh, if we once get on to that subject we shall never have done! (*Wishing to make peace.*) Sylvie, we had much better go to bed.

Mme. That doesn't tell me where you met Paulin Ménier. (*Monsieur walks about the room without speaking.*) Instead of snapping your fingers, as if you'd dipped them in boiling oil, it would be more polite to answer me.

Mons. (trying to keep calm). I've told you once. It was in the Passage du Jouffroy one wet day. We were jostled by the crowd. Moving back I trod on his foot, and turned round to apologise.

Mme. But it seems most extraordinary that you should just have trodden on Paulin Ménier's foot.

Mons. The chances of life——

Mme. And you suppose that you noticed then that he was dark?

Mons. (raising his eyes to the ceiling, and clenching his hands). Oh! (*He doesn't reply, and strides calmly up and down the room.*)

Mme. It's no use turning up the whites of your eyes and stiffening yourself like a piece of india-rubber; that's no answer.

Mons. But what the devil do you want me to say?

Mme. That I am right.

Mons. I've said so twice already.

Mme. Yes, but there are ways of saying things.

Mons. (speaking calmly). Listen, Sylvie: I'm not very well, and so let us end this dispute, and go to bed.

Mme. When you're in the wrong it's easy to get out of it by saying you're not well. And don't you think I am ill too; you've made me sick and giddy with your walking about the room, round and round the furniture.

Mons. (losing patience). Well, then, I'll relieve you of my presence.

(He shuts himself into the drawing-room, and Madame, after a moment, joins him.)

Mme. When do you mean to put an end to this farce? You know I can't endure sulky and obstinate people. Is it my fault if I'm right? Do you suppose for one moment that it matters anything to me whether your Paulin Ménier is dark or fair? Only as he is fair, I should like to know your reason for insisting that's he dark.

Mons. But as I acknowledge that he's fair, why the devil can't you leave me alone?

(He takes refuge in the dining-room.)

Mme. (following him). You might at least be polite and answer me without swearing like a trooper. Monsieur—I don't know why—pretends to have nerves, and therefore thinks he may dispense with good manners.

(Monsieur retires into the kitchen.)

Mme. (following him). And then you know I detest spiteful people, who always look as if they were champing their bit. I prefer good-tempered persons who don't try to make a fit of the sulks everlasting. Of course they have moments of ill-temper; but once past, they think no more about it—like your friend Bichard, for instance.

Mons. (irritated). Ah! there's a man I heartily approve—just at this moment.

Mme. What's that? What do you mean?

Mons. (striving to speak calmly). Nothing, oh, nothing! But for the last time, leave me alone.

(He flees into the hall.)

Mme. (running after him). Ah! you approve of Richard because he boxed his wife's ears. You'd doubtless like to follow suit, and imagine that I'm as weak as Aglaé. But I warn you, threaten me only with the tips of your fingers, and to-morrow'll be the last day of your life. *(Going close up to him.)* There! touch me, I defy you to. *(Without a word he gently pushes her away.)* Ah! you daren't. You haven't courage to be cowardly enough to beat a woman! Look at my nails! I'd tear your face with them. Oh!

Mons. (still master of himself). Take care, Sylvie; you nearly put your finger in my eye.

Mme. Let go my wrist, or I'll shriek help! murder! fire! all at the same time.

Mons. Then be careful what you're doing with your hands.

Mme. (losing all control over herself). Ah! you want to beat me because Paulin Ménier's fair. Go on then. I insist. Come, begin.

Mons. (in a towering passion). Oh!

(He goes on to the landing.)

Mme. (following him). Ah! you're one of the cowards who beat women. Go on, begin with me.

(He goes up to the second floor.)

Mme. (going up after him). Hit me, then. I only ask that much. Just hit me. *(Hands and teeth clenched.)* Yes, yes, yes, Paulin Ménier is fair. Now, hit me.

(He mounts to the third floor.)

Mme. (rhythmically). He is fair, he is fair. Hit me then, you great coward!

(Monsieur tries to go up higher, but realises that he has reached the garret.)

Mme. I told you you wouldn't dare to lay a hand on me. Now that you've got me into the garret—away from witnesses, just try to strike me! I defy you to!

Mons. (losing his head). Sylvie, you'll drive me mad. I implore you to leave off.

Mme. He is fair.

Mons. Once—twice!

Mme. He is fair, fair, fair.

Mons. Three times!

Mme. Arch-fair.

Mons. (exasperated beyond endurance). THERE! (*He boxes her ears.*)

(Stupefaction! Monsieur is astounded at his brutality, but the blow brings about a salutary crisis in Madame's nervous condition, and she suddenly bursts into tears.)

Mons. (ashamed). Sylvie, I humbly ask you two hundred thousand pardons.

Mme. (sobbing). No, my darling, it's for me to ask your pardon. I was wrong. Now my memory returns. I was confusing Paulin Ménier with Madame Nilsson, the celebrated opera-singer.

EPILOGUE.

The noise of the blow resounding through the garret woke all the inhabitants of the house, who thought the roof must be giving way. Just as the pair, happy in their reconciliation, were coming down the stairs, they all appeared at their respective doors, and seemed to say as they passed—

“What children they are, and how they must love each other to take walks on the tiles—like the cats—when they have their own rooms.”

And that is how history is written.

Eugène Chavette.

AN OLD FRIEND.

M. LEMADRU, a bachelor who had not set up house-keeping, received a present of a fine fat fowl stuffed with truffles. He sent it on to his old friends M. and Mme. Dubourg, friends of thirty years' standing, with whom he dined every Thursday. The bird was placed on the drawing-room chimney-piece, where, to the great satisfaction of the Dubourgs, it gradually improved. Every hour, with glistening eyes, and licking their lips, they went to look at the progress of the corruption that brings truffles to perfection.

At length the long-looked-for Thursday arrived.

The fowl's toilet was carefully made, and at four o'clock precisely it was put down to the fire.

As it was being dished up the pair received the following note:—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Important business prevents me dining with you. But I invite myself to luncheon to-morrow; keep me a wing of the fowl.

"Your affectionate old friend,

"LEMADRU."

On reading this they both cried in a tone that came straight from their hearts, "We'll keep the whole bird for him!"

"A friend of thirty years' standing!" said Madame Dubourg.

"To whom we owe our fortune!" added her husband.

"Who saved your life!"

"Who has given us a hundred proofs of affection!"

And they went on repeating both together, "Yes, yes, we'll keep the whole bird for him."

But this unlooked-for *contretemps* took away their appetite, and at dinner they scarcely touched anything. And after making a last pious pilgrimage to the fine fat fowl on the sideboard, they went to bed almost starving.

In the middle of the night M. Dubourg, kept awake by hunger, perceived by the glimmer of the night-light that his wife was not asleep.

Mons. I was thinking of——

Mme. So was I.

Mons. Can you smell it?

Mme. The scent of truffles always comes through the pipes of the stove.

Mons. Did you bolt the doors? If the cat——

Mme. Good heavens, how you frighten me! You'd better go and see.

(The husband jumps out of bed, and returns with the fowl, which he puts on the table by the bedside.)

Mons. More frightened than hurt! A cold shudder ran through me.

Mme. How nice it looks!

Mons. All the nicer since we are dying of hunger.

Mme. But that's our own fault. Lemadru left us free to dispose of it all.

Mons. Except one wing! True, it's the best bit.

Mme. Lemadru has good taste.

Mons. You should rather say he's greedy.

Mme. If you like; but bear in mind he's satisfied with one wing when, after all, the whole of the bird is his. But I'm sure he wouldn't mind a bit if we just ate a drumstick.

Mons. Each?

Mme. Of course.

Mons. Then we must tell him that your mother, passing through Paris on her way from Amiens to Nice, unexpectedly invited herself to dinner.

Mme. Why, you seem to be afraid of Lemadru.

Mons. I afraid! Let this drumstick choke me if I'm afraid! He'd have to be quite another sort of man. Surely after thirty years I can judge of that. He's a good fellow, of course, but brave—that's quite another thing.

Mme. I feared so; he makes such a parade of his courage.

Mons. He's so untruthful.

Mme. Do you know what we might do?

Mons. What?

Mme. Eat the rump too! We can say my mother was accompanied by my brother.

Mons. Better still, let's demolish the whole of the back, and we can add that your brother was accompanied by his wife.

Mme. Agreed! Only we mustn't touch the truffles.

Mons. We'll keep them all for our old friend.

(A brief interval of silence, disturbed only by sounds of munching.)

Mme. What wine shall we give Lemadru to drink with his fowl? I had thought of our old Beaune.

Mons. Did you think so? We've scarcely six bottles left. It would be better to keep them for strangers. If

we go and ruin ourselves for the sake of this fowl, it ceases to be a present.

Mme. But it seems to me that Lemadru quite deserves——

Mons. Oh, if we're to put ourselves out for an old friend, it wouldn't be worth while to have friends at all. Come, my dear, suppose we eat a slice or two of the back. He's so vain and egotistical that I'm positive the whole neighbourhood already knows that he has made us a present of the fowl.

Mme. (quickly). Which cost him nothing.

Mons. Only an egotist could have behaved in such a way! Do you call saying, "We'll eat it together," making a present of a fowl? Especially for a man with a delicate digestion like his. If he had come to dinner this evening, I ask you what could he have eaten? A mere nothing, the least little slice; and for that we must have cut into it, ruined it!!! Otherwise it would have kept till Sunday, when we have company to dinner, and we could have put on the table a fine fowl that would have done us credit. I tell you he's a selfish creature. During thirty years he's given me plenty of proofs. Why, in sending this fowl which cost him nothing, he thought to himself, "They will provide table-linen, soup, wine, two vegetables, dessert, etc., etc., etc., etc.!" I could be very generous after that fashion, and yet be very sure not to ruin myself. Lemadru's an old skinflint, who wouldn't give a poor man a penny for an omnibus ride.

(Madame persuades Monsieur to eat the truffles.)

Mons. Well, just to please you then! After all, Lemadru only asked us to keep one wing.

Mme. So I'll eat the other.

Mons. I'm certain he thought he was playing us a nice

trick, saying he couldn't come till to-morrow. He thought we should kick our heels in front of the sideboard till he arrived.

Mme. He thinks everybody is as stupid as himself.

Mons. Yes, it's quite true he hasn't set the Thames on fire. He's taken in by anything, especially if it's about women. He would go to the moon, or swim after a ship to China, if you put a petticoat on the main-mast.

Mme. Yes, it's quite true he's a good swimmer.

Mons. Because last year he saved a cart from drowning? A fine thing, I must say.

Mme. Better than that.

Mons. Ah! I know what you mean. You think I owe my life to him. In the first place I wasn't drowning, I was reflecting. He, thinking I remained at the bottom from inexperience, plunged in. He would have done just the same had it been his *concierge*, for he wanted to marry, and desired to fascinate the lady with a medal for saving life. It's extremely amusing for a girl to marry a man with a mania for getting up at night to save drowning people.

Mme. I really thought he saved your life.

Mons. And supposing he did, I amply repaid him when he went too near the worm-wheel in our factory, and I cried out, "Take care." So we're quits, you see.

Mme. Yes; but he exposed himself for you.

Mons. Exposed himself? To what did he expose himself? Didn't I expose myself too—to be proceeded against by the law if he had been crushed by the machine?

Mme. I had not taken that into consideration.

Mons. Pass me another bit of the carcass.

Mme. There isn't any more.

Mons. What! is it all gone? (*With suspicion.*) Are you sure of your servant?

Mme. Why, she'd rather add something out of her own pocket.

Mons. Then that fowl was only skin and bone.

Mme. There's still the second wing we put aside for Lemadru.

Mons. But that's sacred.

Mme. Inviolable ! A solemn trust !

Mons. Then if Lemadru doesn't come to-morrow, we'll put his wing in the bank. How he'll respect us. But ours will be the finest part ; and if he meant to play a trick on us, he'll be well paid for his spite.

Mme. Oh, his spite is easily seen through ! For if we wanted to eat his wing——

Mons. (severely). You mustn't talk like that, Pélagie.

Mme. I was merely supposing a case.

Mons. You mustn't even suppose.

Mme. I meant that others in our position would find a hundred good excuses.

Mons. (incredulously). A hundred excuses, and good ones too ! Short of inventing impossibilities, that seems to me somewhat difficult.

Mme. Oh, not as impossible as you imagine ! For instance, suppose we told Lemadru we never received his letter.

Mons. Pélagie !!!

Mme. (quickly). A mere supposition, of course.

(A silence, during which the beating of their hearts is audible.)

Mons. Then, Pélagie, let us draw lots which of us shall eat the wing.

Eugène Chavette.

IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND.

Mamma. Yes, my dear Madame Possau, we are looking for a husband for our Cunégonde. For several months, observing our daughter, we said to each other: "She has plenty to eat, a grand piano, and a good digestion, so why should she be so depressed?" Therefore my husband and I puzzled our brains why she should spend hours contemplating the pendulum of the clock.

Papa. Yes, we were vastly puzzled. But, one morning, looking in my desk for the locksmith's bill, I came upon a document, and on opening it found that it was the little one's certificate of birth. "That's it," I exclaimed. "You see, our daughter is eighteen years old, although you always maintain to everybody that she's going on for twelve."

Mamma (blushing). I really thought so, Madame Possau. A good housekeeper is always so busy that the years slip by without your knowing it.

Papa. Then I said directly: "I know what has made my daughter so melancholy ever since she became eighteen, and I know what she wants—the grand piano is not enough." Then, with the help of a few intimate friends, we began to seek a good husband for her. Thanks to our obliging friend Nantas——

Mamma. Nantas obliging! he! I don't know how you make that out. At dinner, yes, he's obliging enough when you heap up his plate and he says, "Then, just to oblige you." Maybe that's one form of obligingness, and certainly it costs little.

Papa. But it is, however, to Nantas that we owe the series of capitalists who prowled round Cunégonde.

Mamma. Ah! they didn't take me in. It dazzles you at first, but if you allow them to get over you, some fine morning you'll be told, "You know that your son-in-law

has walked himself off." And the next day you have your daughter and three children into the bargain thrown back on your hands, and as to the dowry, so little of it is left that it's difficult to believe there ever was any. Ah! I know a thing or two, I do.

Papa (shaking his head). Ah! you know a thing or two, do you? But scarcely in the case of your famous Count Boissot d'Alloignon, who humbugged you with his title and his splendid estate in Vendée, where, he said, he wished us to spend the remainder of our days. A nice prospect for us! for on making inquiries the lawyer of the place informed us that the fine gentleman's estate consisted of a family vault. And although I had packed my trunk ready for retiring to that estate, you will readily understand that I did not insist on it. Our suitor was more of a ruin than the Temple of Ephesus.

Mamma. Yes, but a handsome man.

Papa. Nearly eight feet. People would have said that we had married our daughter to the Eiffel Tower. I should have dreaded an accident every time that Cunégonde wanted to climb up to kiss her husband. For he was too proud of his birth, which dated back to the Crusades, to deign to stoop—and besides, he always wore his hat in order that he might raise it every time the name of Louis XVI. was mentioned. Then, too, he had a way of talking about his future plans for Cunégonde's happiness that was far from reassuring. He always began his sentences with, "When God has taken you from this world." Once he was our daughter's husband, we should plainly have been in his way, and as I am never indiscreet, I sent him about his business.

Mme. Possau. Why don't you look for a son-in-law in the fine arts—painting, for instance?

Mamma. Bah! men who are for ever shutting themselves up in a studio with naked women. They call that "taking a

model." Well, I shouldn't mind that so much, but they get so accustomed to women without clothes, that they are vastly astonished when their wives ask for money to buy any.

Papa. A learned antiquary, a Monsieur Pichoz, was introduced to us. He also was a character! He spent his life in buying dirty little pots, and saying, "That comes from the Greeks; this comes from the Romans." Then he sorrowfully lifted his eyes to heaven, adding, "If I had money, I would have a finer collection than that of the Louvre!" His ambition made us fear for the dowry, so we evicted Pichoz.

Mme. Possau. But hasn't your daughter herself shown a preference for any of the suitors?

Mamma. She rather liked the sixteenth lawyer.

Papa. No, it was the fifth banker.

Mamma. Was it? Confound it, I mix them all up. For the last five months there's been a regular march past. But, in a word, she did care for one, but we quenched the dawning passion by telling her that he was a somnambulist!

Mme. Possau. And just at the moment, you haven't a candidate?

Mamma. We are resting.

Mme. Possau. Have you a prejudice against certain professions?

Papa. Oh, no. A good business, very lucrative, with no dead season, is all we want—a butcher or a baker, for instance.

Mme. Possau. I know the very thing.

Mamma. We would accept a son-in-law from you with our eyes shut.

Papa. So long as Cunégonde likes him; for we are not of those barbarous parents who drag their daughters to the altar by the hair.

Mme. Possau. I know that one of my husband's young colleagues—

Mamma (with terror). A doctor !

Papa. The devil !

Mme. Possau. Are you prejudiced against the profession ?

Mamma. Not exactly. But the profession of a doctor places the mother-in-law in a delicate position. He might desire to perfect himself in chemistry by experiments—and having his mother-in-law at hand——

Mme. Possau. Nonsense ! if you never accept anything from your son-in-law but shawls or wardrobes, I'll undertake that he'll never harm your health.

Mamma. I should have preferred a baker.

Papa. Or a butcher.

Mme. Possau. But let us understand one another. You demand a business that has no dead season. What becomes of your butcher during Lent ? While he is perfectly idle, the doctor, on the contrary, is busy looking after colds and coughs engendered by the carnival.

Papa. Very well, so be it as far as the butcher's concerned. But the baker ?—people must eat bread all the year round.

Mme. Possau. Suppose there's a famine ? What ruins the baker makes the doctor rich. I don't want to praise up the profession, since I'm married to a doctor, but we have complaints enough to give occupation to any man who will work hard. At the very lowest, you can make about 30,000 francs a-year in the ordinary course of things. In the spring, measles and skin complaints ; in summer, dysentery and sun-stroke ; in autumn, fevers ; in winter, chest complaints and colds. I repeat that's in the ordinary course, but there's the *extraordinary*.

Papa. Ah ! there's the extraordinary ?

Mme. Possau. But you surely are not so stupid as to ignore that. My husband wouldn't part with his cholera and typhoid fever for 10,000 francs. I don't count the embalmments ; he gives me those for my dress ; and you

can't say I dress like a poor woman. It's true that we've only rich patients, and heirs don't bargain about embalmments.

Mamma. But in summer, the rich patients—not those who are embalmed, of course—go to their country-houses, and the doctor has nothing to do.

Mme. Possau. Ah! it's easy to see you're not in the business! You would have remembered the confinements, always very prevalent in July, and they give you enough for a holiday in Switzerland. Be guided by me: take a doctor for a son-in-law—a hard-working man, of course—and you may be sure there'll be no dead season, for diseases have no politics, and never fall out with the government.

Mamma (undecided). But, you see, I've a prejudice against being a doctor's mother-in-law.

Mme. Possau. Well, in that case would you like me to introduce you to a surgeon? Your son-in-law couldn't cut off your leg without your knowing it, and as he can't work without his tools, as soon as you saw him open his instrument case you would be on your guard.

Mamma. But life wouldn't be worth living if you had to keep your eyes continually fixed on your son-in-law's hands. It would cause unpleasantness in the family circle.

Papa (uttering a cry). I have it! Your surgeon gives me an idea. Suppose we look for a son-in-law among the sausage-makers.

Eugène Chavette.

THE BRIGANDS DESPOIL THEIR CAPTIVES.

A PARTY, consisting of an English lady and her daughter and a young German *savant*, with their guide, Dimitri, a Greek, were captured by brigands during an excursion in the hills surrounding Athens. The brigand who constituted himself spokesman asked Dimitri :

“Who is the tall, thin man standing by you?”

I replied for myself:¹ “A respectable German, whose worldly goods will not enrich you.”

“You speak Greek very well. Turn out your pockets.”

I emptied on to the road about twenty francs, my tobacco, pipe, and handkerchief.”

“What is that?” asked the grand inquisitor.

“A handkerchief.”

“What for?”

“To wipe my nose.”

“Why did you tell me you were poor? Only noblemen use handkerchiefs for that purpose. Take that box off and open it.”

My box contained a few plants, a book, a knife, a small packet of arsenic, a half-empty calabash, and the remains of my breakfast. The last item brought a gleam of covetous-

¹ The story is told by the German.

ness into Mrs. Simons's eyes. I was bold enough to offer her the food before my possessions changed hands. She greedily accepted and began to devour the bread and meat. It was now her turn. Before emptying her pocket she harangued our captors in the language of her fathers. English is one of the few tongues that can be spoken with the mouth full. "Reflect on what you are about to do," she said in a threatening tone. "I am an Englishwoman, and English citizens are inviolable in every country in the world. What you take from me will be of little use to you, and will cost you very dear. England will avenge me, and you will all be hanged, to say the very least. Now, if you want my money, you've only to say so ; but it will scorch your fingers—it is English coin."

"What does she say?" asked the brigand.

Dimitri replied: "She says she is English."

"So much the better ; all the English are rich. Tell her to do as you did."

The poor woman emptied on to the sand a purse containing twelve sovereigns. The mercy of her captors permitted her to retain her pocket-handkerchief.

Dimitri the guide was released, and asked the ladies if they had any commands for him.

"Tell him," shrieked Mrs. Simons, "to rush to the Embassy, then to go to the Piræus and find the admiral, to complain to the Foreign Office, and write to Lord Palmerston. We shall be delivered by force of arms, or by the authority of the government ; but I do not intend one penny to be spent in my ransom."

Hadji-Stavros, the King of the Mountains (the brigand chief), interrogated Mrs. Simons.

"Madam," said the King, "you seem angry. Have you any complaints to make of the men who brought you here?"

"I should rather think I have," she said. "Your rascals

stopped me, threw me into the dust, plundered me, made me lose flesh, and starved me."

"Pray accept my apologies. I am compelled to employ men without breeding. Pray, madam, understand that they did not act thus by my orders. You are English?"

"English, and from London."

"I have been to London, and I know and esteem the English. I am aware that they have good appetites, and you must have noticed that I hastened to offer you refreshments. I know that the ladies of your country do not care to be hurried over rocky ground, and I regret that you were not permitted to take your own pace. I know that people of your nation, when travelling, only take with them absolute necessities. I shall not forgive Sophoclis for robbing you, especially if you are a lady of rank."

"I belong to the best society in London."

"Deign to take back your money. You are rich?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Is not this bag yours?"

"It is my daughter's."

"Take back your daughter's property also. You are very rich?"

"Very rich."

"Do not these things belong to your son?"

"That gentleman is not my son; he is a German. As I am English, how could I have a German son?"

"You are right. Have you an income of 20,000 francs?"

"More."

"Bring these ladies a carpet! Is your income 30,000 francs?"

"More than that."

"Sophoclis is an idiot, who must be well punished. Logothetis, order dinner to be prepared for these ladies. Is it possible, madam, that you are a millionaire?"¹

¹ Meaning in receipt of a million francs income.

"I am."

"I am simply overwhelmed with confusion when I think of the way in which you have been treated. Of course you have influential friends in Athens?"

"The English ambassador is a friend of mine, and if you would allow me——"

"Oh, madam! You are also acquainted with merchants and bankers?"

"My brother, who is in Athens, knows several bankers there."

"I'm delighted to hear it. Sophoclis, come here, and apologise to these ladies."

Sophoclis muttered some inaudible apologies. The king continued—

"These ladies are Englishwomen of rank; they are millionaires, and are received at the English Embassy. Their brother, who is in Athens, knows all the bankers there."

"Certainly," exclaimed Mrs. Simons.

The king proceeded: "You ought to have treated these ladies with the respect due to their fortune."

"Of course," said Mrs. Simons.

"To have brought them here gently——"

"What for?" muttered Mary Ann.

"And to have refrained from touching their belongings. When you have the honour to meet two persons of the rank of these ladies, you should greet them respectfully, bring them to the camp with the greatest deference, guard them with circumspection, and politely offer them all the necessaries of life, even until their brother or their ambassador sends us a ransom of 100,000 francs."

THE BRIGANDS' MENAGERIE.

A reinforcement arrived which made our situation intolerable. It was not a troop of brigands—it was far worse. The Greeks carry about with them a whole menagerie of

small, agile, capricious animals, which it is impossible to catch. They keep them company night and day, do not leave them even while they sleep, and by their leaping and pricking quicken the action of their minds and the

"A DIVISION OF THE VAN ATTACKED MY RIGHT CALF."

circulation of their blood. The fleas appertaining to brigands -I can show you a few specimens in my entomological collection—are less civilised, hardier, and more agile

than those belonging to dwellers in cities: life in the open air possesses such potent virtue. But all too soon I saw that they were not content with their lot, and found a meal off the fine skin of a German more delicate than one off the tanned hides of their masters. An armed force took its way to my poor legs. I felt at first a violent itching round the ankles. That was the declaration of war. A couple of minutes later a division of the van attacked my right calf. I touched it with my hand. But at the diversion thus created, a division of the van advanced by forced marches up my left leg, and took up its position on the top of my knee. I was outflanked, and all resistance became useless. Had I been alone, and in some retired spot, I should have attempted, and with some success, a skirmish with the enemy. I dared neither complain nor defend myself. I heroically hid my discomfort without looking at Miss Simons; and on her account I suffered a martyrdom for which she will never thank me.

Edmond About (1828-1885).

THE CAB.

WHO doesn't know the composer Janoty? Although he is as poor as Job, and his operas have as yet only been heard at a very minor theatre, this man with his colourless hair and complexion, afflicted with one of those faces that Heine called "superfluous," was a month ago loved for himself, and was the happy owner of that rarer thing than rhymes to *triumph*—a faithful wife. Now all is changed, and you shall learn how he came by his tragic fate.

Colette was an adorable little woman, forcing herself to believe in her husband's genius, keeping the house clean and nice without the aid of a servant, economising on

nothing at all, fabricating delicious dishes out of chimerical ingredients, always amiable, good-tempered, and cheerful, playing Janoty's compositions on the piano as often as he liked, even a hundred times following. To make the boiled beef palatable, she provided sauces fit for an archbishop, of ideal and divine flavour, drawn solely from her own imagination. She would walk in the hot sun to the Batignolles market, where lobsters are sometimes to be bought for a halfpenny. Janoty was perfectly happy, beloved, cherished, caressed, and fed as well as a rich abbot. How did it happen then that in less than five minutes all this was changed? That is just what I'm going to tell you.

Tata, the *prima donna* of the minor theatre where Janoty's compositions were performed, had an immense success with the song, "My brother pumps, pumps, pumps," and she came to ask Janoty to write an air for her in the new piece which should be, and yet should not be, "My brother pumps, pumps, pumps." Our *maestro* had just the very talent that those sorts of compositions require. Colette opened the door to her; she was washing vegetables, and held a dish-cloth in her hand. "Announce me," said Tata, spreading out her train, and Colette, who never gave herself airs, announced her. While Tata was putting forth all her arts to dazzle Janoty, down came one of those showers which, during the past month, have spoiled so many hats and brought into bloom so many roses.

"Good gracious! how it's coming down," said Tata. "May I trouble you to let your maid fetch me a cab?"

There was a fine opportunity for Janoty to prove himself a courageous, or merely an honest man, and to say, "I haven't a maid, it's my wife." He was a coward, and replied, "Certainly." Then, twirling his thumbs, he went into the dining-room, which did duty for a hall,

where Colette was washing her vegetables more industriously than ever, rubbing and scraping away like the worthy housewife she was. "Mademoiselle Tata," he muttered, "is wearing a satin gown and satin shoes. It is pouring cats and dogs; it would be very kind of you to go——"

"And fetch a cab?" asked Colette, giving her husband a flaming glance that ought to have made him sink into the earth. "Fetch a cab! Well, I never! Directly!"

She went, getting her only pair of boots quite wet, and even taking the coppers that Tata slipped into her hand for

her trouble. And from that moment Janoty, without leaving the house, could witness every day a pantomime in five hundred tableaux, with most extraordinary transformation scenes. He made the acquaintance of iced soup and warmed-up wine, of the lamp exchanged for a guttering candle, and as he was sitting down to dinner the meal would be replaced by a piece of sausage wrapped in paper. Colette, who used to rise with the lark, could now be awakened with difficulty at eleven o'clock, and would then murmur, "Surely it's not daylight yet." The house, formerly so spotless that you would have sought a grain of dust in vain, resembled an Italian city in the hands of the Goths. There were cobwebs in the plates, and saucepans on the clock. Coats and shirts were buttonless, and stockings full of holes. And instead of performing her husband's compositions, she played nothing but Wagner.

Her irritating hands evoked the stormiest sounds; the piano was full of Tannhausers, Walkyries, Rheingolds, and Götterdämmerungs, and when Janoty in despair held his head and cried, "That music gives me a fearful headache," Colette sweetly replied, "I fetched the cab." And those words formed the refrain of all their conversations. "Colette, the soup is cold." "I fetched the cab." "There are no buttons on my shirt." "I fetched the cab." "You don't love me any more; you never kiss me." "No, my dear, but I fetched the cab!"

Théodore de Banville (1823-1891).

A POET'S SUPPER.

[*Gringoire, pale, shivering, half dead with hunger, enters surrounded by the guards.*]

Gringoire. Ah! gentlemen of the guard, where are you taking me? Why this violence? (*The guards do not reply.*) They are Scotch gendarmes, who don't understand French. (*At a sign from Olivier-le-Daim the guards set Gringoire free.*) What! they set me at liberty? (*Seeing the King and Olivier-le-Daim.*) Who are those noblemen? (*Smelling the banquet.*) Almighty God, what a perfume! They brought me here to supper! They brought me here by force to take a good meal! Force was unnecessary. I would have come of my own free will. (*Looking longingly at the meal set out.*) Pasties, venison, flagons full of sparkling wine! (*To the King and Olivier-le-Daim.*) I guess you saw that the guards were taking me to prison before I had supped, and so you made me come in here to escape their claws—I mean their hands—and to offer me hospitality, like the potters did to Homer.

The King. Is it true, Master Gringoire, you haven't yet had supper?

Grin. Supper? No, sir, not to-day.

Olivier-le-Daim. You've not had supper? Then you'll gladly accept a wing of that chicken?

Grin. (*like a person under an hallucination.*) Yes. Two wings. And a leg!

Oliv. There's wine that would revive the dead.

Grin. (*approaching the table.*) Just what I want.

Oliv. (*stopping him with a gesture.*) One moment! Would it be honest to sit down without paying your share?

Grin. (*his face falling.*) Pay? I haven't a brass farthing.

Oliv. If the Muses have denied you gold and silver, they

have been prodigal to you of other treasures. You have imagination, lofty thoughts, the gift of rhyme.

Grin. (sadly). Such gifts are of no use whatever when a man's hungry, and that's my case to-day. What do I say? To-day! Every day.

Oliv. Understand me. I mean that before satisfying your appetite, you shall recite us one of those odes with which the Muses have inspired you.

Grin. Ah, sir, my appetite is in a greater hurry than your ears. (*He approaches the table.*)

Oliv. (stopping him). No, no. Your verses first. You shall eat and drink afterwards.

(*At length Gringoire gives in, and recites "The Orchard of the King," a ballad reflecting on the evil deeds of Louis XI. Afterwards he recognises that he is in the presence of the king himself.*)

Grin. (quite overwhelmed). The king! No supper for me now. (*He remains motionless.*)

The K. You've nothing more to say?

Grin. Sir, in my silence I think the more.

The K. You think perhaps that after having sung the gallows birds so well that——

Grin. Nothing can prevent me——

Oliv. From being hanged.

Grin. (who already feels suffocated). Ah!

The K. (pointing to Olivier). He spoke without my orders, but he probably stated the truth.

Grin. (to the King). Hanged! And without supper?

The K. You would like to sup?

Grin. Yes, indeed. But the king will not permit it.

The K. (laughing heartily). Fie! What do you mean by that? It's ascribing a spirit of vengeance to me unworthy of a Christian and a gentleman. I don't send my friends to their last rest fasting. You can sup.

Grin. At last!

"AH, SIR, MY APPETITE IS IN A GREATER HURRY THAN YOUR EARS."

The K. Eat and drink to your heart's desire!

Grin. There's no fear of that.

The K. Sit down at once.

Grin. That's wise; I've no time to lose, if this banquet I'm about to eat is to be my last. What am I saying, the last! Why, it's the first! Oh, the marvellous pasty with its dungeons and towers! Would you believe it? That's exactly what I have been dreaming of ever since I was born. Only think! I've always been hungry. That's all very well for one year, two years, ten years! But in the long run you're hungry all the same. Every morning I said to the rising sun, every evening to the shining stars: "To-day, then, is a fast day!" They answered me, the beautiful stars, but they couldn't give me bread. They hadn't any. How easy it must be to be good when you eat such delicious things! This is the first time I have even seen such victuals. Oh, the delicious clear wine! Ah! it puts joy, sunshine, all the virtues into one's heart! How beautiful my life is going to be! Who dares say I'm going to be hanged? I assure you that I don't in the least believe it. (*To the King.*) What will it avail you to hang a child of Calliope and of the sacred choir of Parnassus, one, sire, who can relate your deeds to future races, and make your actions as lasting in man's memory as those of Amadis of Gaul, or of the Knight of Perseus?

The K. You've made such a good beginning.

Grin. (*piteously*). Not very good.

The K.

"All hanged and dead, they've summoned
(With Hell to aid that hears them pray)
New regions of an army dread."

Grin. (*doubtfully*). Oh! they summon them. Do you see, sire, good sense is not my strong point? (*Modestly.*) I've only genius. Well, then, hang me! That's about all I'm fit for. What is there left for me to do on this planet,

already grown cold? I loved the rose and the splendid lily, I sang like the grasshopper, I acted mysteries for the glory of the saints, and I do not see that I have left anything undone, except to leave behind me little Gringoires to shiver with hunger, and to sleep on the hard, cold ground. The only thing that I neglected until now was to sup. And I have supped excellently.

Théodore de Banville.

THE DREAM.

THE day before yesterday my friend Raoul was married at Sainte-Clotilde. On arriving at the church I found a great crowd, and the ceremony already in progress. The priest finished his address thus, "Be then united on earth until you are definitely united in heaven."

I could scarcely restrain an exclamation. Raoul was not marrying a spinster, but the pretty little Countess Jeanne de Charmelieu, the widow of my friend Gaston de Charmelieu. That charming woman was destined to make my friends happy. Raoul after Gaston. On earth, nothing could be simpler. Gaston having withdrawn, Raoul remained; but for the definite union above, in heaven, there will be two, Gaston and Raoul, the first and second husband.

I left the church, paid two or three calls, returned home, dined at the club, went to the opera, and was everywhere pursued by the ridiculous idea, "How will Raoul and Gaston arrange things in the other world?"

I went to bed and slept. Then the dream began.

I was in Paradise, at the railway station. A great bustle of trains. The carriages left empty, and returned more or less full. St. Thomas was the station-master. I had a chat with him, and he very kindly explained the organisation.

He went on talking, but I ceased to listen, for at the door of a saloon carriage I saw the pretty head of my widow of Sainte-Clotilde, Gaston's wife, Raoul's wife. And she rushed about, crying out: "Paradise, where is Paradise? Here's my ticket."

And St. Peter came to her and said: "Your ticket, madame; kindly show me your ticket?"

"Here it is, Monsieur."

"Quite correct, you may pass. Here is the entrance to Paradise."

I was seized with an immense desire to follow her.

Who knows? Perhaps Raoul was dead, and my widow would find herself between her two husbands.

I asked St. Thomas if he could allow me to enter.

"Easily," he replied.

"Yes, but at most for an hour. I don't want to be compelled to stay. I shall be able to leave? because, don't you know, however pleasant Paradise may be, if I'm still good for a few years on earth, I don't want to lose them. Life only comes once, and Paradise is for ever."

"Be assured, you will be able to come out again." And he took me to St. Peter: "You will know this gentleman again," he said; "he wants to have a look round, and come out again."

"Pray go in, Monsieur; I shall know you again."

There I was in Paradise. Just in the nick of time. Raoul and Gaston, who had been eagerly scanning the new arrivals, had already rushed up to *their wife*.

Gaston had seized her right hand and was drawing her to one side, saying: "Jeanne, my dearest Jeanne."

Raoul had seized her left hand, and was pulling her towards the other side, saying: "Marthe, my dearest Marthe."

She had two Christian names, and she had thought it better for her second husband to use the one that had not

served for the first. She was a charming creature, with exquisite delicacy of feeling.

Neither Raoul nor Gaston, however, appeared disposed to give way.

"Jeanne!"



"I AM YOUR FIRST HUSBAND. 'I AM YOUR SECOND HUSBAND.' 'MY RIGHT IS INDISPUTABLE.' 'MONSIEUR, LEAVE THIS LADY ALONE.'"

"Marthe!"

"I am your first husband."

"I am your second husband."

"My right is indisputable."

"Monsieur, leave this lady alone."

"I am not speaking to you, Monsieur. I do not know you!"

I do not know you! Now on earth, when they were alive, they were intimate and inseparable friends. Raoul, the second husband, was always to be found at Gaston's, and ill-natured gossips said—but as if one can believe everything ill-natured gossips say.

However, the dispute between Raoul and Gaston waxed hotter. Their voices became louder. Life in ~~heaven~~ is pleasant, but just a little monotonous; and the least event has something of the effect of a carriage accident in a small provincial town. The elect ran up from all sides. Some took the part of the first husband, others that of the second. Jeanne did not move; she had freed her hands, and did not speak either to Raoul or to Gaston.

St. Thomas had accompanied me into Paradise.

"You must often have similar cases," I said. "Women with two husbands are not uncommon on earth."

"True! But what is unusual, absolutely unusual, is that the two husbands should fight over the wife. Ordinarily, in such circumstances, the husbands don't want the wife again."

"And when the situation is reversed? when there are two wives for one husband?"

"Oh! that's quite a different thing. It's the women who're anxious to catch the husband. Women are mad about marriage even in Paradise."

At that moment St. Thomas was interrupted by a loud shout from the crowd of the elect. "The holy father! the holy father!" He chanced to be passing that way, and hearing the noise, came up.

A dream, this is merely a dream that I cannot get out of my mind.

He stopped and asked what was going on. The affair was shortly told him.

"Well," said the holy father, "what could be simpler? The lady is here as a reward for her piety and Christian sentiments. She has every right to absolute and long-lasting happiness. Let her make her choice between the two gentlemen."

"But," remarked Gaston, "what of the one who comes in a bad second?"

You observe how Gaston, who, when alive, had kept a racing stud, preserved, even after his death, deplorable habits of speech.

"Well," replied the holy father, "I'll give him one of the unclaimed women who crowd Paradise. Come, madame, do not waste any time; make your choice."

Silent, motionless, Jeanne stood between her two husbands, and then Gaston and Raoul in turn, like an ancient Greek play, sought words which might most surely move their wife's heart.

"Really, Monsieur," interrupted Raoul, "such recollections are out of place——"

"Possibly, Monsieur, but I am permitted to recall—to speak of my love, and also of my trust. My confidence was to be admired! How many persons came to me and said perfidiously, 'Give heed to Raoul. Observe him carefully. He is of course very fond of you; but there's one person he likes better, and that is your wife.' I paid no attention to such idle tales."

"I also proved valiant in the matter of confidence. Later, Monsieur, when, after you, I was in my turn the husband, gossip still went its way. People spoke to me of Monsieur de Séricourt, of Séricourt, my best friend; what an absurdity!"

I noticed that at the name of Séricourt Jeanne could not repress a slight start. But I was the only one who observed it; Raoul remarked nothing, and continued—

"And when Séricourt was killed in Mexico, when the

unexpected news caused you most natural and legitimate grief, I received an abominable anonymous letter, stating that my wife wept for the friend more than she would weep for the husband. I never mentioned the letter to you. To suspect you! To suspect Séricourt!"

"Who may Séricourt be?" cried the holy father. "Is he a third husband? I'm fairly puzzled by all this."

"One word in conclusion, holy father, just one word more. On my wedding-day an excellent priest assured me at Sainte-Clotilde that our provisory union on earth would be followed by a definite union in heaven."

"And me, holy father," replied Gaston, "on my wedding-day, at the Madeleine, a bishop, do you mark—not a priest, a bishop—made me the same promise in exactly the same terms."

"Dear me, this becomes very embarrassing, very embarrassing," said the holy father. "My representatives on earth sometimes act very thoughtlessly. But, madame, it is for you to decide."

And then the little widow, blushing, and with much emotion, said: "If you are of infinite goodness, Lord, you will allow me to go to M. de Séricourt, who is in that little cloud to my left; he has been making signs to me for the last quarter of an hour."

I turned my head and saw Séricourt performing a gallant and expressive pantomime in his little cloud.

Another friend, Séricourt! I repeat that this charming woman was destined to make all my friends happy, even to eternity, both in this world and the next.

"Why didn't you say so at once?" replied the holy father. "That settles everything. Make yourself happy with M. de Séricourt. Since you were a good Christian, my only desire is that you should have a good time in Paradise."

And thereupon I awoke with a start.

Ludovic Halévy (1834).

CIRCE.

THE PRINCE (*thirty years old*). THE COUNTESS (*a widow, twenty years old*). SCENE—*The Countess's boudoir.*

The Countess. How do you do, Prince?

The Prince. What! at home? How lucky I am!

The C. But you wrote me that you were coming.

The P. Did I? Really? That's very curious, very amusing! How is your mother?

The C. Quite well! only a little bit tired. She's just gone up to her room. Won't you sit down?

The P. (sitting down). Do you know why I've come?

The C. What?

The P. I want your advice. Yesterday I was dining at the Embassy; the talk turned on drawing-room comedies, those little things, don't you know, that are acted without scenery, and the difficulty of finding anything not too hackneyed, that hasn't been done everywhere, and that should be quite suitable.

The C. Yes. Well?

The P. Well, I was in rather a lively mood, and undertook to write such a trifle in a week. There's a rather serious wager in it besides. Well, in short, since yesterday I've been dreaming of it without otherwise fatiguing myself.

The C. And you've found something?

The P. Nothing. As yet I've found nothing. But it'll come. The happy thought of talking it over with you came into my head. If you'll be so good, we'll write it together. It's quite easy, you'll see.

The C. But I'm not convinced that it is so easy.

The P. Positively. Nothing could be simpler. Come, will you try?

The C. Oh! I'm quite willing. But you must do the writing.

The P. Of course.

The C. There's paper and ink, blue ink; is that all right?

The P. Blue ink can't do any harm. (*He sits down to the writing-table.*) There, you sit opposite, like a Muse, and let's begin without further ceremony.

The C. Certainly. But it seems to me rather difficult.

The P. Not at all. It's very easy. Always the same thing. People talking of the rain and the fine weather, more or less wittily, as it happens? Don't you see?

The C. Yes; go on.

The P. Let's first write down the *dramatis personæ*. "The Count, the Countess," isn't it?

The C. Of course. But is it a proverb?

The P. Yes, it's a proverb.

The C. But what proverb? That must be settled first.

The P. By Jove, why? It's not necessary. It'll come of itself as we go on; it will evolve itself naturally out of the conversation; it will be the climax.

The C. All right. Go on.

The P. "The Count, the Countess. Scene I." Well?

The C. Eh!

The P. What are they to say?

The C. What is the subject?

The P. There isn't a subject; it's only a trifle, I tell you, a mere nothing, an improvisation without substance, a pleasant chat, that's all. You don't imagine I mean to write the *Misanthrope*.

The C. Still we must decide what they are to talk about.

The P. About nothing, any nonsense. You know how those things go.

The C. No, prince, I know nothing at all about them, and, as it seems, neither do you.

The P. Now, don't let us quarrel. We say, don't we,

"The Count and the Countess"? They are in the country, and the Count, I suppose, is bored.

The C. Yes, that's so original!

The P. I don't say it's original, but any way it's a subject, since you will have one. Then the Count is bored, and the Countess—the Countess——

The C. Suppose she was bored too?

The P. That's a bright idea, and with that complication the thing becomes original. They are both bored. There, you see, we're getting on. Let us get to the dialogue. That's easier. Once in the dialogue the thing'll go of itself.

"The Count." The Count enters, isn't it?

The C. Perfect!

The P. And on entering he says——

The C. He says?

The P. What?

The C. I ask you.

The P. Confound it! He might say, for instance, "Always alone, my dear Countess?"

The C. I see no objection.

The P. It's the correct expression for a man who's feeling bored. "Always alone, my dear Countess?"

The C. It's a charming expression. And what does the solitary Countess reply?

The P. Wait—yes—perhaps—that is to say no—it wouldn't do.

The C. Instead of entering the diplomatic service, with your facility, you should have taken up literature.

The P. (*getting up*). It's certain I am too stupid, and then I'm thinking of something else. I'd better go.

The C. No!

The P. I assure you that I had a mind once. Ask at the Embassy; they know me there. But I'm quite changed. Good-night; I'm going.

The C. No!

The P. I'm not to go?

The C. No, I tell you!

The P. Very well, then. (*He sits down again.*)

The C. Let us continue. Where were we? "The Count, the Countess."

The P. The fact is, you must take me for a conceited ass.

The C. Does the Count say that?

The P. No; I do.

The C. Oh, no! I only find you rather eccentric.

The P. Eccentric! I'm much obliged to you. But no, I assure you. I beseech you, ask at the Embassy. They'll tell you I'm not wanting in intelligence, and that formerly I possessed a certain amount of vivacity.

The C. But, Prince, I've no need to ask at the Embassy, I've only to remember. A few months ago, when you made love to me, I found you remarkably brilliant.

The P. Brilliant, no. But I was like anybody else.

The C. Yes, exactly. You were a brilliant, sparkling, terrifying young man. (*She rubs her hands gently.*)

The P. You're laughing at me. I wasn't sparkling, but I had some vivacity two years ago! It's true I had only just come to Paris, and hadn't undergone the influence of the climate.

The C. You think it's the climate?

The P. What will you have? It must be something. It isn't age; I'm not thirty yet. Well, then, I think I shall leave France, and also the diplomatic service. My mother wishes me to go back to Vienna; I had a letter from her this morning; I wanted to show it you. (*He fumbles in his coat-pocket, and takes out a letter half entangled in a lace veil.*)

The C. What's that lace you're pulling out of your pocket?

The P. (*confused*). Lace? Where is there any lace?

The C. Here. But explain, Prince ; it's my veil.

The P. Your veil, this ? Are you sure ?

The C. Certainly ! and I reclaim it, if you will allow me. Although you don't suspect it, it's very valuable lace.

The P. I beg you to believe that I attached no mercenary value to it. But how could I be carrying your veil about ?

The C. It's easily explained. I left it at the Embassy when I was calling there. They asked you to bring it back to me, and with your usual absence of mind you forgot the commission.

The P. That's evident. A thousand pardons. It's evident. You see I'm no longer good for anything. All my faculties, even my memory, are impaired. It's high time I went back to breathe my native air. You see what my mother writes.

The C. (*looking through the letter*). Your mother seems to be a nice woman.

The P. Yes. We are very fond of one another. She advises me against too much success. Poor mother ! She thinks I'm irresistible.

The C. Were you ever so, Prince ?

The P. Well, yes, a little, until I had the pleasure of meeting you. Now, what do you advise ?

The C. To go, since your mother wants to see you again.

The P. That's my opinion too, and, to tell you the truth, I came this evening on purpose to say good-bye.

The C. What ! to say good-bye ? And the proverb ? What jest was that ?

The P. The proverb ? Well, I wanted your last impression of me to be a pleasant one. You laugh. Well, here's the history of the proverb. You have perhaps not entirely forgotten what was settled between us two years ago, after I so futilely offered you my heart and name. It was

agreed that if I desired to remain your friend, I was to refrain strictly from any allusion to the love you had repulsed. I pledged you my word, and I believe I have scrupulously kept it.

The C. You are right.

The P. Well, I'm going to break it. Forgive me, I swear I'm going away. My discretion and reserve have naturally led you to think that my passion was cured.

The C. Naturally.

The P. Yes. But it's not so. I still love you. I love you like a madman, like a child, like an angel, like a savage, as you will. Determined to go away, I wanted before I went to make one supreme, despairing effort. The idea of the proverb occurred to me. Under pretext of the proverb, I thought to express my sentiments with so much ardour, emotion, eloquence, and wit, that you would certainly be softened, dazzled, and subjugated. You see how well I succeeded! Isn't it comical? Now, madame, good-bye.

The C. Good-bye, Prince.

The P. One word more. Do me the favour to tell me why you refused me. My proposal was honourable, and not altogether unattractive. Why did you reject it so decisively? Was it from caprice or antipathy, or had you a serious reason?

The C. I had a serious reason.

The P. You loved some other man?

The C. No.

The P. Then your heart was as free as your hand. You told me yourself that you were not particularly happy with your husband—although people say he was charming.

The C. (*gravely*). He was charming, entirely charming, sparkling, irresistible—like yourself—formerly.

The P. Then since you were not happy you had no reason to remain faithful to the past. I had a distinguished name,

fortune, and position. At that time I was not ill and depressed as now. I was moderately good-looking.

The C. Very handsome even.

The P. I had the reputation of a lively talker. If I remember rightly, I made love to you—with intelligence.

The C. With a very great deal of intelligence.

The P. And you refused me! Now, why?

The C. You can't guess?

The P. Not in the least.

The C. (*takes his hand and looks tenderly into his eyes*). Why, my dearest, because I like dull men!

Octave Feuillet (1821–1890).

A PARVENU AND HIS COOK.

Poirier. Now, Monsieur Vatel, are you preparing a fine dinner for to-morrow?

Vatel. Yes, sir; and I make so bold as to declare that my illustrious ancestor would not disown the menu. It will be a work of art, and Monsieur Poirier will be astonished.

Po. Have you the menu about you?

Va. No, sir; it's at the printer's; but I know it by heart.

Po. Be so good as to recite it.

Va. Potage aux ravioles à l'Italienne and potage à l'orge à la Marie Stuart.

Po. Instead of those two outlandish soups you will serve a good meat soup with vegetables.

Va. What, sir?

Po. That is what I desire. Go on.

Va. Removes: Carpe du Rhin à la Lithuanienne, poulardes à la Godard, filet de bœuf braisé aux raisins, à la Napolitaine, jambon de Westphalie, rôtie madère.

Po. Here are simpler and more wholesome removes:

POIRIER: "WE'LL PASS ON DIRECTLY TO THE ROAST, WHICH IS THE ESSENTIAL
DISH." VATTEL: "IT'S AGAINST ALL THE PRECEPTS OF ART."

Brill and caper sauce, ham and spinach, veal and sorrel, stewed rabbit.

Va. But, Monsieur Poirier, I can never consent——

Po. I am master here, do you understand? Go on.

Va. Entrées: Filets de Volaille à la concordat, Croustades de truffes garnies de foie à la royale, le faisan étoffé à la Montpensier, les perdreaux rouges, farcis à la Bohémienne.

Po. Instead of those entrées we'll have nothing at all, and pass directly to the roast, which is the essential dish.

Va. It's against all the precepts of art.

Po. I'll take the responsibility on myself. Now let's hear your roasts.

Va. It's of no use, sir. My ancestor ran his sword through a man for a less offence. I tender you my resignation.

Po. Just what I was going to ask you for, my good fellow. But as a servant must give a week's notice——

Va. A servant, sir; I am a cook!

Po. I shall replace you by a servant. Meanwhile you are still in my service for a week, and you will prepare my menu.

Va. I would rather blow out my brains than do violence to my name.

Po. (aside). Another who cares for his name! Spoil your brains, Monsieur Vatel, but don't spoil your sauces.

Emile Augier (1820–1889).

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

MY resolve had been taken, and my preparations made; it only remained for me to inform my housekeeper. I must acknowledge that it was a long time before I could make up my mind to tell her I was going away. I feared

her remonstrances, her railleries, her objurgations, her tears. "She is a good, kind creature," I said to myself. "She is attached to me; she will want to prevent me from going, and the Lord knows that when she has set her mind upon anything, gestures and cries come easy to her. In this instance she will be sure to call the concierge, the scrubber, the mattress-maker, and the greengrocer's seven sons. They will kneel round me in a circle, they will begin to cry, and then they will look so ugly that I shall be obliged to yield, so as to be spared the pain of seeing them any more."

Such were the awful images, the sick dreams, which fear marshalled before my imagination. Yes, fear—"fecund Fear," as the poet says—gave birth to these monstrosities in my brain. For—I may well make the confession in these private pages—I am afraid of my housekeeper. I am aware that she knows I am weak; and this fact alone is enough to dispel all my courage in any contest with her. Conquests are of frequent occurrence, and I invariably succumb.

But for all that I had to announce my departure to Thérèse. She came into the library with an armful of wood, to make a little fire, she said; for the mornings are chilly. I watched her out of the corners of my eyes while she crouched at the hearth, with her head in the opening of the fireplace. I do not know how I found the courage to speak, but I did so without much hesitation. I got up, and, walking up and down the room, observed in a careless tone, with that swaggering manner characteristic of cowards, "By the way, Thérèse, I am going to Sicily."

Having spoken thus, I awaited the result with great anxiety. Thérèse did not reply. Her head and her vast cap remained buried in the fireplace, and nothing in her person, which I closely watched, betrayed the least emotion. She poked some paper under the wood and blew up the fire. That was all!

At last I saw her face; it was calm—so calm that it annoyed me. “Surely,” I thought to myself, “this old maid has no heart. She lets me go away without saying so much as ‘Ah!’ Can her old master’s absence really affect her so little?”

“Well then, go, sir,” she answered at last; “only be back by six o’clock! There is a dish for dinner to-day which will not wait for anybody.”

I asked my way to the house of Signor Michael-Angelo Polizzi, and proceeded thither.

I found Signor Polizzi, dressed all in white from head to feet, busy cooking sausages in a frying-pan. At sight of me he let go the handle of the frying-pan, threw up his arms in the air, and uttered cries of enthusiasm. He was a little man, whose pimply features, aquiline nose, round eyes, and projecting chin made an expressive physiognomy.

He called me “Excellence,” said he was going to mark that day with red chalk, and made me sit down. The hall in which we were served for kitchen, reception-room, bedchamber, studio, and wine-cellar. I glanced at the paintings on the wall.

“The arts, the arts!” cried Signor Polizzi, throwing up his arms again to heaven,—“the arts! What dignity! what consolation! Excellence, I am a painter!”

And he showed me an unfinished Saint-Francis, which indeed could well afford to remain unfinished for ever without any loss to religion or art. Next he showed me some old paintings of a better style, but apparently restored after a decidedly reckless manner.

“I restore,” he said, “I restore old paintings. Oh, the old masters! what genius! what soul!”

“Why, then,” I said to him, “you must be a painter, an archæologist, and a wine merchant all in one?”

“At your service, Excellence,” he answered. “I have

a *zucco* here at this very moment—a *zucco* of which every drop is a pearl of fire. I want your lordship to taste it.”

“I esteem the wines of Sicily,” I replied. “But it was not for the sake of your flagons that I came to see you, Signor Polizzi.”

He: “Then you have come to see me about paintings. You are an amateur. It gives me immense delight to receive amateurs. I am going to show you the *chef d'œuvre* of Monrealese. Yes, Excellence, his *chef d'œuvre*! An adoration of shepherds! It is the pearl of the whole Sicilian school.”

I: “Later on I shall be glad to see the *chef d'œuvre*. But let us talk about the business that brings me here.”

His little, quick, bright eyes watched my face curiously, and I perceived, with anguish, that he had not the least suspicion of the purpose of my visit.

A cold sweat broke out over my forehead; and in the bewilderment of my anxiety I stammered out something to this effect: “I have come from Paris expressly to look at a manuscript of the *Golden Legend*, which you informed me was in your possession.”

At these words he threw up his arms, opened his mouth and eyes to the widest possible extent, and betrayed all the signs of extreme nervousness.

“Oh! the manuscript of the *Golden Legend*. A pearl, Excellence! a ruby! a diamond! Two miniatures so perfect that they give one a glimpse of Paradise! What suavity! The colours ravished from the corollas of flowers make a honey for the eyes! Even a Sicilian could have done no better.”

“Let me see it, then,” I asked, unable to conceal either my anxiety or my hope.

“Let you see it,” cried Polizzi. “But how can I, Excellence? It is not here! I have not got it.”

And he seemed determined to tear out his hair. He might indeed have pulled out every hair in his head before I should have tried to prevent him. But he stopped of his own accord before he had done himself any grievous harm.

“What!” I cried out in anger—“what! you make me

come all the way from Paris to Girgenti by promising to show me a manuscript, and now when I come you tell me you have not got it! It is simply infamous, sir! I shall leave your conduct to be judged by all honest men!”

Anybody who could have seen me at that moment would

have been able to form a fairly good idea of the aspect of an enraged sheep.

"It is infamous! it is infamous!" I repeated, waving my arms, which shook with anger.

Then Michael-Angelo Polizzi let himself fall into a chair in the attitude of a dying hero. I saw his eyes fill with tears, and his hair—until then flamboyant and erect upon his head—fall down in limp disorder over his brow.

"I am a father, Excellence! I am a father!" he groaned, wringing his hands.

He continued, sobbing—

"My son Rafael—the son of my poor wife, for whose death I have mourned these fifteen years—Rafael, Excellence, wanted to settle in Paris. He took a shop in the Rue Lafitte for the sale of curiosities. I gave him everything precious I had, and finally the manuscript of the *Golden Legend*. I would have given my flesh and blood! An only son, Signor! The son of my poor saintly wife!"

"So," I said, "while I—relying upon your written word, sir—was travelling to the very heart of Sicily to find the manuscript of the clerk Alexander, the same manuscript was actually exposed for sale in a window in the Rue Lafitte, only fifteen hundred yards from my house."

"Yes, it was there, that is positively true!" exclaimed Signor Polizzi, suddenly becoming calm again. "And it is there still—at least I hope it is, Excellence."

And it was for this, I said to myself, that I had taken the trouble to come to Sicily.

Anatole France (1844).

*TWO KNIGHTS OF THE LEGION OF
HONOUR.*

AFTER the storm a sharp wind blew down the street, rattling the blinds and rippling the puddles. Through my wet window-panes I saw two gentlemen who had evidently just met. Both decorated with the Legion of Honour, differing considerably in appearance, though equally distinguished looking, they mutually shook hands, silently, with dignity, and with an air of severity.

The one, thin, with waxed moustaches, his chimney-pot hat on one side, his frock-coat tightened at the waist, must have filled some high position in the army. The other, rather stout, with long white hair and clean-shaven face, white necktie, and silk hat, was the very personification of a member of the Academy.

They did not unbend in the least. On the contrary, they stiffened themselves in their respective attitudes, the officer leaning with the palm of his hand on his big walking-stick, and the man of learning clinging to the hooked handle of his unfolded umbrella. And so they stood, motionless, dumb, under the drops of water that were still falling from the eaves.

Their embarrassment becoming prolonged, won my heart ; and on my honour, instinctively, I felt very uncomfortable on their account.

At length the man of learning decided to break the silence ; his lips moved. At the sound of words I could not hear, the countenance of the man of war darkened ; it seemed suddenly furrowed by lines of sadness, and the reply was meditated with great care.

Then the officer's teeth seemed to be masticating curt expressions.

The man of learning gave a start, his eyebrows kept on

going up and down like trap-doors over his sparkling eyeballs. And crossing his hands on his stomach, he betrayed an incredulous amazement, a pity that seemed mingled with terror.

I was monstrously interested. Obeying the inward need of dramatising life, I wondered at the blind power of chance that had suddenly brought the two antagonists face to face at a cross-road. But was it chance? That is what I feared I should never know.

They then abandoned themselves to a sufficiently equivocal manner of proceeding. The officer lifted his stick and moved it stiffly round his left boot as if he was drawing a plan. Then he waited.

In his turn the man of learning, by means of his umbrella traced a triangle on his right shoe, which he ardently contemplated with bent head like a mathematician solving a problem.

That done, they looked at each other with mutual anxiety, eye to eye.

I held my breath.

Suddenly the man of learning pointed his umbrella at the officer's foot and described an ellipse above it.

Tears filtered from his eyes, and the wind in its rage shook his coat-tails. With a feverish gesture he drew a handkerchief from his pocket, in which he buried his nose, and without interrupting the exchange of these mysterious proceedings he touched the respectable toes of the man of learning with the end of his heavy stick.

He took off his head-covering, ran his fingers through his hair, and sighed painfully.

What could be the outcome of such a situation?

The two men seized each other by the hand, talking very fast and both together, forcibly restraining themselves and redoubling their gestures of assent.

When they parted I noticed that they both limped.

The representatives of the Legion of Honour were doubtless sufferers from gout; and I had assisted at what it pleased them to say concerning their feet, all their feet, nothing but their feet.

Paul Hervieu (1857).

HOW I WON MY GOLD STRIPES.

THE famous Colonel Fix was then in command of the 27th Dragoons, stationed at Louviers. He was the pet aversion of the townsfolk, the nightmare of the burgo-master, the father of the dragoons, and the terror of the volunteers, *quorum pars parva fui*.

The regimental kitchen garden produced cabbages worthy of the land of Canaan, and the officers in order to curry favour sent the colonel barrows full of manure on his birthday and that of his wife, on New Year's Day, and on certain solemn occasions of less importance, such as the *Grand Prix*,¹ and the masked balls at the opera-house, when it was his custom to amuse himself in Paris.

There was quite a procession of orderlies, of perspiring and groaning servants, marching through the streets of Louviers, pushing in front of them hundredweights of the precious matter.

Our noble chief, with his cap on one side and his hands in the pocket of his hussar's pelisse, stood at the garden gate to inspect it as it passed.

"Filthy stuff that, filthy stuff, manure fit for a foot-soldier. Take it away, fool!"

The orderly wheeled round, and the officer sent a telegram, "Can't come; manure and leave refused!"

"Perfect, perfect, gold itself," and another telegram was despatched, "Exquisite manure; expect me to-night."

¹ The French "Ascot."

As for us poor devils of volunteers, an outburst of temper on the part of the colonel was the only thing that broke the monotony of our days. Surly, unpleasant, he came into quarters at nine in the morning, petrified the guard, caressed the ailing horses, and stirred the minute pieces of meat swimming in the prisoners' soup with the end of his cane: "There, eat that; it's very nice for you, you scamps. You broke the knees of my best horse."

They always broke the knees of his best horse even if it was eighteen years old, with bent knees and seared fetlocks, and always with the same consequence—fifteen days.

Then he stopped the butcher's cart, the regimental purveyor, mounted amidst the pieces of beef, and if he found there was too much bone, burst into a torrent of muttered invectives followed by a terrific explosion. Suddenly he jumped down off the vehicle, and the frightened purveyor quickly gathered up the reins and drove off amid a hailstorm of insults and curses.

"Gallop away, brigand, rascal! gallop away, and bring me good stuff. You dare to deal out bones to my dragoons, my children!"

Like a blast of wind he stormed through the kitchens and the stables, scolding the stupefied scullions for not washing the cabbages clean before putting them in the soup, whispering soothing words to the restive horses. He invariably dragged with him the veterinary surgeon, the adjutant-major, the adjutant of the week, trotting along respectfully in Indian file.

A thrill of horror ran through the barracks. The mere sight of the colonel caused a sudden stampede; he had so keen an eye for missing buttons and tarnished spurs.

Such is the mentor who for the last eight months has made our lives a misery. For eight months we hadn't set foot outside Louviers, and two examinations had put me in

the first rank of "conditionals" without promise of the least little leave or the humblest promotion.

Well, one Sunday afternoon, the *Moniteur de Rouen* in my hand, I was dreaming of unlimited leave and glittering gold stripes in the silent hall of the Café Demouy, when my sleepy eyes caught a line in the paper—

EXHIBITION,

HORTICULTURAL AND AGRICULTURAL, AT ROUEN.

Opens July 1.

A thrill ran through me from the top of my cropped head to the nails of my orderly boots. Flames of apotheosis dazzled me, and, like Christopher Columbus with his presentiments of a new world, I caught a glimpse of vague and marvellous pictures.

Then, trembling with at least as much emotion as the great Genoese at the sight of the floating vegetation that proved land could not be far off, I read through the programme of the exhibition. A silver medal was to be awarded for market garden produce.

Oh, cabbages! oh, triumphant vegetables! once the Egyptians erected altars to you, but never was a more ardent prayer than mine addressed to your beneficent virtues! At that moment, oh, cabbages! you seemed to me brilliant sun, and you carrots! robes of royal purple, and you onions! rich ingots, and you danced a wild saraband round a star of glory—a silver medal to be awarded for market gardening!

The medal! The cabbages of the 27th decorated! The new Jason, who should necessarily carry out that fabulous enterprise, would win more laurels than the demi-gods could cut.

There was no time to lose, it was already June 27th. Feverishly I read the programme of the exhibition over

again, the names of the jurors and commissioners. All unknown except one, my ex-professor of rhetoric, Garnuchot.

Ah! if Garnuchot would! but he detests me. He formerly expelled me for founding in his class the "Poets' League," a manuscript and naturalist newspaper. I can't reckon on him. What's to be done?

Do not betray me, gentle cabbages, rustic carrots, dishevelled leeks, keep my secret, and I promise you a shining halo!

I sent for a sheet of ministerial paper, and in Madame Demouy's very room, far from the eyes of the curious, I committed a crime—forgery.

I sent the result of my wicked scheme in a thick envelope to a friend at Rouen, and the next morning without opening it he posted a majestic epistle that he had received ready addressed—

TO COLONEL FIX,

Commanding the Regiment of Dragoons,

LOUVIERS.

On the following Tuesday we were in the riding-school, when the door opened with tremendous noise, and the colonel entered shouting "Halt!"

Then pointing the end of his cane at me: "Come here, you little Cossack, you; are you out of your mind?"

Certainly I was out of my mind, or on the way to it. What was going to happen to me? Perhaps imprisonment, perhaps success, wild, un hoped-for success. I had, as in a flash of lightning, a simultaneous vision of a dark dungeon and marvellous gold stripes.

"So you're a distinguished botanist. Well, I should never have thought it. But all the same, it seems that you are a distinguished botanist, at least, so M. Ganachot, Ganuchot declares. What the devil is the man's name?"

And the colonel pulled out of his pocket an enormous letter written on ministerial paper.

My letter! I thought I should have fainted.

"Hum—hum—should be most honoured—your magnificent vegetables that we only know by reputation—hum—ah! here it is. I invite you in the name of the committee to take part in our horticultural and agricultural exhibition. You have in your regiment a well-beloved old pupil of mine, already a distinguished botanist, with whom I often spent holidays botanising. It would therefore be best for him to accompany your exhibit—hum—and it's signed Garnuchot, Professor of Rhetoric, member of the Organising Committee of the exhibition. Your Garnuchot is a clever fellow; tell him I say so. I was sure that my vegetables would be talked about, and if I had time I would go myself to Rouen. But, since you are so distinguished a botanist, you shall go. You had better start at two o'clock, and you will explain things there. It opens the day after to-morrow. Go to the chief's office, he'll give you a four days' leave. Come to me at eleven o'clock, and I'll sign it."

Soon, having carefully trimmed myself up for the occasion, I took my way towards the redoubtable den of Father Fix, a big white house, No. 6 Guitar Street.

There he was at the window, dressed in his old blue Lancers' coat, a souvenir of the war, that he always wore at home, and without heeding the passers-by, shouted at me: "Your record is satisfactory. You're a capital little soldier. Go and get a corporal's stripes sewn on, and come back to luncheon here. Quick march!"

I had wings. I went and came like a regiment at full charge. The tailor sewed an enormous pair of stripes on my tunic; they reached up to my elbow, and during the operation my comrades regaled me with coffee. In vain I tried to prevent it, to refuse, to repeat that I was going to

lunch at the colonel's. I had to swallow seven goblets full.

Father Fix was still at the window. He rubbed his hands when he saw me rush up, magnificent and all out of breath. A forage cart was waiting in the street.

Horror! I had to swallow veal cutlets and spinach on the top of my seven goblets. I, a lowly corporal, lunched with the colonel. And on my face, growing ever paler, good Madame Fix followed the phases of the subterranean combat of the veal cutlet and the canteen coffee. She attributed my disturbed appearance to my strong emotion, and maternally made me swallow a spoonful of sal volatile. I almost shrieked; it was like a bar of red-hot iron passing through my body, but I was cured.

"Come, sir ambassador, you feel better now," said the colonel; "come and see your little packages."

My little packages consisted of an enormous case containing three hundred pounds weight of different vegetables, and a curly, bedizened, appetising cabbage, surrounded by a magnificent paper frill.

"That you are to take to the general-in-chief, and to tell him that dragoon Fix makes him a present of it for his stock-pot. The others you are to deliver to Monsieur Garnuchot with the greatest care."

If I were to live a hundred years I should never forget the phenomenal spectacle we presented to the inhabitants of Guitar Street. The colonel of the 27th Dragoons, his cook, his orderly, and a corporal uttering, "Aha!" and "Houp! that's right," loading the regimental carriage with three hundred pounds weight of vegetables.

When at length the package was properly adjusted, I got in beside it, and very carefully took my full-blown cabbage with its paper frill in my two hands, and, escorted by five-and-twenty street boys, the carriage started off.

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My cab jolted over the wretchedly paved roads of Rouen. I heard my case of vegetables creaking above my head. It was badly nailed down, and I sowed turnips as I went, and with the bedizened cabbage in my hand I looked like a bridegroom in a pantomime.

The portico of the mayoralty was decorated with bundles of flags, escutcheons, and an enormous placard—

DISTRICT EXHIBITION.

Underneath it no one, neither a juror nor a commissioner. What were they all doing?

A porter told me what they were doing—they were resting; the time for admission ended to-day at noon. It is now five o'clock!

Ah! there comes the spectre of my failure. He is terrible, approaching me with long steps, lunettes, a badly-brushed hat, he makes threatening gestures, he speaks, and in a hollow voice says: "Young warrior, what do you seek within our walls? Since when does Mars escort the gifts of Pomona and Ceres?"

It is Garnuchot.

"My master, my beloved, my venerated, my respected master, is there a confessional at hand where I can unbosom myself to you? Save me, for the love of Racine and Boileau. In the name of the poet who wrote

'To be unhappy is to be innocent.'

Master, have pity, my sorrow is deep, and you alone can rescue me from disgrace. I kneel before you, Monsieur Garnuchot——"

The excellent man (for he is excellent, and it's I who was formerly a young wretch), the excellent man spread out his arms, saying—

"*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto,*" and he led me into the office of the secretary of the exhibition.

"YOUNG WARRIOR, WHAT DO YOU SEEK WITHIN OUR WALLS?"

There I confessed everything, and I must say that at one particular moment I thought all was lost, my master jumping up from his chair; but then I drew so moving a picture of our misfortunes in the regiment that Garnuchot uttered unconsciously—

“Can it be, sir, that such was your fate?”

“Yes, sir, such is my fate, and if you don't pardon me, absolve me, and admit my vegetables in spite of the regulations, it will be much worse. It is death, master, death without delay. I shall never survive so great a disgrace.”

“Well, well, my dear child, I pardon your crime, and admit your vegetables. Your conscience and remorse will be sufficient punishment, but you played a dangerous game. There, dry your tears.

Claudite jam rivos.

I will give your exhibit a good place. To-morrow morning the jury awards the prizes, and who knows——?”

“Master, the colonel was perfectly right in saying that you were a clever man.”

“Pupil, a man is always clever when he is indulgent towards the follies of others.”

On this conclusion, well applied, M. Garnuchot led me back to the cab, in order to superintend the unloading. Four stout gardeners took the case on their shoulders, and I assisted to unpack it.

My merchandise was still quite presentable; only all the carrots and half the turnips failed to answer the roll; but there were cabbages, monumental cabbages! If I had lost one on the way, I should have let the people of Rouen know it.

The next day a letter was brought me.

“MY DEAR PUPIL,—I have informed the gentlemen of the jury of the hazardous request I made the other day

to your colonel. To speak the truth, it was necessary for you to come to Rouen to remind me of it at the right time; I am so absent-minded!

"I advised the dispensers of horticultural fame that the exhibit of the 27th Dragoons deserved something better than a platonic admiration. I proposed, and those gentlemen agreed, to bestow on the warlike contribution the pacific reward reserved for market garden culture. Your cabbages have won the silver medal.

"Farewell, rash young man. Yesterday you quoted La Fontaine. Permit me to ask you if you consider it justifiable to say that

'Our enemy, 'tis our master?'

"Your Professor and friend,

"GARNUCHOT."

I jumped into the train just starting for Louviers.

With great bustle, terrible Father Fix, in the midst of a group of officers, was coming along the street leading to the station. He was brandishing his cane, and his cap was all on one side—a bad sign; some one must have been breaking the knees of his best horse.

Suddenly he shouted: "Halt, wheel, idiot, and my cabbage?"

I approach, salute; for all reply, hand the colonel the certificate of reward.

"The medal! the silver medal! And it's all through you, you have procured me this distinction! What do you want? A week's leave, a fortnight's leave! Speak! You're only a stupid and say nothing! I appoint you quarter-master. Go and get stripes of gold sewn above your stripes of worsted."

Henri Allais.

CIVIL MARRIAGE.

(On the terrace of the Orangerie. A lady, aged thirty, walks quickly; she seems preoccupied.)

“BRRR!! it’s freezing here! There’s no good in staying any longer! To-morrow’s the *Foire aux Plaisirs*, Saturday the races, Sunday the Grand Prix. It’s just the weather for catching cold. How I must love Adalbert to come in search of a wife for him in such weather! There’s devotion! Shall I find one? That’s the important point! She must be as handsome as he is—slender, beautiful, and intelligent. So far, I’ve seen no one that attracts me in the least; he is far better than all of them! He is so handsome, so—wait! It seems to me there was one who—— *(She retraces her steps for a short distance. Turning back sadly.)* No, it’s not to be thought of! She is awkward, common! He wouldn’t approve, I’m sure. Besides, I don’t like her, and it’s most important that I should. Oh, how vexatious it is! I must continue seeking, begin all over again these interminable fatiguing expeditions! But I’ll go now, for it’s quite certain I shan’t find what I want here.

(She walks down the terrace, and is going out into the Place de la Concorde. At the same moment a gentleman, aged forty-five, enters the garden.)

The Lady (to the gentleman, who passes very quickly).
How do you do?

The Gentleman. Ah! I beg your pardon, I didn’t see you! Where are you going, walking in this freezing weather?

Lady. To my carriage. I left it at this gate—and you?

Gent. I’m taking Madame X., who is arranging her stall, an address I promised her.

Lady. Will they let you in?

Gent. Oh yes ; I'm part of the business.

Lady. What business ?

Gent. I'm an organiser, don't you know? Will you come with me ?

Lady. No, I'm too cold.

Gent. It will warm you. We'll run.

Lady. Come along then, but we must be quick.

Gent. In very truth, you look frozen. Why do you come to the Tuileries all alone in such weather ?

Lady. Not for my pleasure! I've just been there (*pointing to the Orangerie*).

Gent. (*absently*). Ah! very nice! (*Resuming the conversation.*) But what did you go there for ?

Lady. I went to look for—for—a marriage.

Gent. For yourself ?

Lady. Oh! rather not! In the first place, I don't exactly see why I should go there for that; and in the second, I am far too happy as I am to——

Gent. (*interrupting her*). There, that will do. Since the rest of the explanation would contain unflattering remarks on the sex to which I've the honour to belong, I'd rather not hear them from your pretty mouth. Then who is it you are marrying ?

Lady. I'm not marrying yet, unfortunately. I want to marry, which is by no means the same thing——

Gent. But who ?

Lady. My best friend.

Gent. Ah! is he young ?

Lady. Yes; but just the right age to marry, and he wants to——

Gent. I hope so, for his sake. Is he nice ?

Lady. Adorable !

Gent. Well, a man marries on less than that.

Lady. And then he has every possible good quality. You've no notion of it.

Gent. I'm very sorry! And naturally you are very fond of him?

Lady (emphatically). I adore him!

Gent. (surprised). Hum! I did not think you were so extravagant in your likings. I even thought you cold.

Lady. So I am, generally. But he knew how to conquer my indifference, and what would you have? It's stupid, I know, but now I love him madly; and to please him there's nothing I wouldn't do.

Gent. He's to be envied! But tell me, if you love him as much as all that, why are you seeking to marry him?

Lady. Because he's dying to get married!

Gent. Are you sure? Has he told you so?

Lady (shrugging her shoulders). Do you only understand things when you're told them? Don't you suppose I've seen it by a thousand trifles?

Gent. What, what? A thousand trifles!

Lady. Of course! For instance—stay! you'll make me say something foolish. Well then, admitting that I haven't seen it myself, I've been told, don't you know?

Gent. You've been told! Who could have been stupid enough to tell you that?

Lady. Why, your friend X.

Gent. (astonished). He! Why does he interfere, the idiot?

Lady. He did me a great service in informing me, and I'm exceedingly obliged to him.

Gent. Naturally. That's exactly what he counted on, the wretch! I'm very curious to know how he managed to—inform—you, as you call it. It was a delicate thing to do.

Lady. Oh! with the greatest propriety. He said, "If you don't marry Adalbert, he'll give you some trouble."

Gent. Ah! his name is Adalbert? (*He seems to be trying to remember.*)

Lady. Yes. Do you think it an ugly name?

Gent. Oh! names are a matter of entire indifference to me. And so you decided to take X.'s advice?

Lady. Yes, and since—I'm looking about!

Gent. And doesn't he, on his part, look about too?

Lady. He'd like to, but I won't let him.

Gent. (*taken aback*). What?

Lady. You look surprised!

Gent. Well, during the last five minutes I've seen you in quite a new light—I assure you I never suspected——

Lady. You consider me and my follies absurd?

Gent. Your "follies"? You call things by suitable names! God forbid that I should consider you absurd; on the contrary. And since you have mentioned it, I must tell you frankly that from to-day I find a new charm in you.

Lady. Because?

Gent. Because you were perfect in my eyes, with one exception.

Lady. Really? and that exception is——?

Gent. It—it's rather difficult to explain! I feared that in you, the side—how shall I put it?—the side "of the affections," to speak correctly, was but little developed. But I was mistaken, entirely mistaken.

Lady. Then you understand my love for Adalbert?

Gent. Adalbert or another! I think that it is always necessary to love some one.

Lady. Another! Oh dear no! When he dies, I've quite decided not to have another.

Gent. (*absently*.) Why should Adalbert die? Is he ill?

Lady. No, but I don't imagine he'll last for ever; my affection does not blind me to that degree.

Gent. Does he love you?

Lady. He! I should just think he does. He adores me. He spends his days at my feet.

Gent. I can understand that. But why the deuce do you want him to marry?

Lady. I cannot suffice him! It's not surprising. (*She laughs.*)

Gent. (surprised). Ah!

Lady. He never leaves me for a second! Even in the house I can't move an inch without him.

Gent. Don't you find that inconvenient?

Lady. No.

Gent. But sometimes—just for a moment, you know—you want to leave even those you love best—the most amusing people get fatiguing in the long run, and——

Lady. But that's precisely Adalbert's superiority over the most amusing people.

Gent. You are probably not anxious that the young lady shall be pretty?

Lady. On the contrary, it's most essential. Beauty's of the greatest importance.

Gent. But—character?

Lady. Bah! character! you can train it! It's only myself to whom that could matter, and as long as she's not altogether bad——

Gent. Do you insist on talent?

Lady. Oh, no. I hate prodigies.

Gent. And you were to see something to-day, here?

Lady. No. I was only looking. I hoped to find something. But there's nothing at all, and I must begin all over again.

Gent. Do you want to marry him to get rid of him?

Lady. To get rid of him? but I shall never leave him!

Gent. (surprised). Ah! you shouldn't talk like that.

Lady. Why?

Gent. (more and more taken aback). What? Why? You say the most dreadful things with a calmness, I had almost

said a candour ; and then you're astonished that I seem surprised, and you ask me why, opening your eyes wide——

Lady. I think you attach too much importance to a folly——

Gent. A folly ! Again !

Lady. A weakness, if you prefer it.

Gent. That's better.

Lady. But a very innocent weakness, that does no one any harm.

Gent. I understand all weaknesses, as you say, because I am acquainted with them all more or less ! I'm not surprised at the weakness, but at the unconcern with which you speak of it. I thought you prudish—almost austere.

Lady. But I don't see that I've said anything that could change that opinion.

Gent. The deuce ! But——

Lady. Instead of being scandalised by my search, you would do better to help me. You would be doing me a service ; you ought to know some one.

Gent. I ? Why, indeed ?

Lady. Through your friends, through——

Gent. My friends are no longer young, it's true, but all the same, they like match-making.

Lady. How funny you are ! You talk just as if it was a serious affair.

Gent. But so it seems to me. You decidedly want beauty, and of course beauty must be combined with virtue ?

Lady. Oh, that's of no consequence at all !

Gent. (*astounded*). Oh !

Lady. Why "Oh !" I know it is said that the former caprices of the mother almost always injure her children, but——

Gent. (breathless). It's not only for the sake of the children, it's——

Lady. For that of Adalbert? Do you imagine he'll care? Now, come, find me some one. It'll be so nice of you. If you only knew how disagreeable it is for a woman to bother about such things! And then she's nearly always taken in.

Gent. So are men.

Lady. Much less, I assure you.

Gent. That's strange. I should have said the contrary. What do you want her to be like? Tell me, and then if I hear of anything, I shall know if it would be likely to suit.

Lady. I want her to be a little smaller than he is, if possible.

Gent. That's rather a vague size—for me.

Lady. I'll show him to you one of these fine days.

Gent. I confess I am curious to——

Lady. She must be dark with tawny lights—a little curly, but not too much—and silky—with golden-colour eyes—small short teeth, and extremely delicate ears and limbs.

Gent. Well, I must say! Dark, with tawny lights, short teeth, gold eyes, likewise delicate ears and limbs. That is to say, that if one met any one like that, one would be almost inclined to marry her oneself. I can quite understand that you won't find that model in a week.

Lady. I'm most anxious about the ears and limbs, for that's a sure sign of race.

Gent. Ah! she must be of good family?

Lady. Of course.

Gent. Adalbert will have a good time.

Lady. That's just what I wish.

Gent. We haven't mentioned the nose. Would you like a majestic nose, or a little pink snub nose?

Lady (protesting). A pink nose? But you don't know anything at all about it. Pink noses are dreadful.

Gent. Eh! eh! But I assure you that——

Lady. I want a black nose like his, or at least chocolate.

Gent. (horrified). What! black or chocolate like his? He has a black and chocolate nose?

Lady. Certainly.

Gent. Adalbert?

Lady. Well, what is there so surprising in that?

Gent. He's a negro then?

Lady. A negro? Of whom are you speaking?

Gent. Why, of your friend.

Lady. What! (*A light dawning on her.*) Ah! great heaven! you thought that—but it's my poodle I'm talking of—and all that I've said—and that you have replied—oh!—it's dreadful!

Gent. (breathing freely). Ah! I'm so glad. But put yourself in my place. I meet you looking frozen, bored; you tell me: "I want to marry one of my friends—the best—I have just been looking for a wife for him—his name is Adalbert, etc., etc."

Lady. And in telling you that I pointed to the Orangerie.

Gent. Ah! the dog-show! I had quite forgotten. I thought you were talking about a marriage in good earnest—or at least about a civil marriage.

Gyp (1850).

LOULOU'S "FIRST PREFERENCE."

[*Loulou is a modern young person, aged fifteen, highly educated, and horribly spoilt. Papa seated at his table writing.*]

Loulou (entering). Do you want me, papa?

Papa (continuing to write). Yes. Wait a bit. Are you busy?

Lou. Of course. I'm always busy!

Papa (still writing). Well---can you leave your work—for about half-an-hour?

Lou. (with caution). Why?

Papa. I've something for you to do.

Lou. What?

Papa. Some letters to copy, if you can spare the time.

Lou. Yes, I'll manage it. (*Aside.*) However dull the letters may be, they can't be as slow as old German declensions.

Papa (finishing the last letter). There! it's about the Aulnaies farm. Copy out those three letters; I want to keep a duplicate, do you see—there's one to Pinson, the miller.

Lou. (taking the letters). Yes, yes, I see.

Papa. Wait! here's another to my solicitor, and the third to—

Lou. All right, I see; give them me at once—I'm in a hurry. (*Aside.*) Papa always thinks that I need so many explanations.

Papa (getting up). Very well, sit there.

Lou. No, I'll write them downstairs. Fraülein is waiting for me—with her declensions. (*Aside.*) I'd rather be downstairs. Here, he'll be always jumping down my throat!

Papa. I'm sorry to interrupt your German lesson, but I haven't time to copy the letters myself. I expect Folleuil at half-past two, and it's now twenty-five past, and I'm not dressed.

Lou. (*pricking up her ears*). He'll be shown in here?

Papa. Who?

Lou. Monsieur de Folleuil, of course.

Papa. Yes, and I shan't be ready. (*He disappears through a door.*)

Lou. (*undecided*). Ah! he'll be shown in here! (*She hesitates a moment, and goes out without taking the letters.*)

Papa (*shouting from the next room*). When you've copied the letters, put them in envelopes, and have them taken to the post—before six o'clock.

Lou. (*entering softly, and settling herself at the writing-table*). I shall stay here. (*Arranging her frock.*) I've taken off my apron. (*Passing her hands under her nose.*) I've washed my hands a bit. (*Looking at the clock.*) Thirty-seven minutes past two. He's seven minutes late. (*She tries several "charming" poses, and ends by knocking a pile of books off the table.*)

Papa (*hearing the noise*). Is that you, Folleuil?

Lou. (*picking up the books*). No, papa!

Papa (*surprised*). What, are you still there?

Lou. Yes, papa, I'm copying your letters.

Papa. I thought you were going to write them in your own room?

Lou. I wanted to—but I thought you preferred not.

Papa. Eh! what could it matter to me? (*She hears the bell ring.*)

Lou. (*aside*). There he is! It's him! (*Agitated.*) It's certainly him!

(*She bends down and seems as if she is writing attentively.*)

Folleuil enters, and Loulou pretends not to see him.

Two steps from the table he stops, laughing.)

Lou. (*aside, looking through her half-shut eyes*). A failure! he knows that I see him.

Folleuil (*bowing low*). Miss Loulou, I have the honour to make you my most respectful compliments.

Lou. (annoyed, getting up). You're laughing at me, talking in that ridiculous manner?

Foll. (gravely). I should never allow myself——

Papa (shouting). I'll be with you in five minutes. Loulou 'll entertain you while I'm dressing.

Foll. Miss Loulou, I don't know what crime I've committed, but I humbly entreat you to accept my apologies. (*He kisses her hand.*)

Lou. (aside, sitting down to the table again, and furtively smelling her hand). It's still scented; that soap is capital. (*She writes.*)

Foll. What! you're going to write?

Lou. Of course.

Foll. Is that what you call entertaining me?

Lou. (still writing).

Foll. Will you leave off, Miss Loulou? No, you won't. Very well, then, I'll tell your father. (*Loulou does not stir.*) René, your daughter won't speak to me! She's writing all the time.

Papa (shouting). Loulou, be polite! Leave off writing, or go away!

Lou. (aside). Go! Oh, dear no! (*She gets up and sits down opposite De Folleuil with an air of resignation.*)

Foll. (amiably). Now, let us talk.

Lou. I'm listening.

Foll. (smiling). But I want you to talk. It's so nice to hear you prattle on. I'm only an ill-tempered old fogey.

Lou. Yes, I know.

Foll. (taken aback). But, really—well, you're very frank.

Lou. (confused). But I didn't mean. (*Aside.*) What an idiot I am!

Foll. Do you work very hard?

Lou. Always.

Foll. You're fond of study?

Lou. Me! Oh, no! Do you think I look like a person

who's fond of study? I hate it, abominate it. It's papa who has taken it into his head that I'm to pass my examinations and even take my degree, goodness knows why!

Foll. (surprised). Your degree, too? It's a funny idea!

Lou. Isn't it just? If papa was a scholar, I could understand it, but he isn't at all!

FOILLEUIL: "NOW, LET US TALK." LOULOU: "I'M LISTENING."

Foll. (shouting). Is this true, René? You want Miss Loulou to take her degree?

Papa (shouting). Yes, certainly. A woman must raise herself above the level——

Lou. But I don't see the necessity.

Foll. (with conviction). Neither do I, the deuce!

Lou. Ah! (*With compassion.*) You don't know much, do you?

Foll. (laughing). Well, I'm not a tree of knowledge, still ——

Papa (shouting). Folleuil ! Folleuil knows everything. He has passed every examination he could ; he is doctor of law.

Lou. (astounded, looking at Folleuil). Rubbish !

Foll. (laughing). It seems that I don't look like it. (*Shouting.*) Will you soon be ready ?

Lou. (wretched, aside). There, that's how it always is. He thinks me a bore.

Papa (shouting). In a moment ; I'm hurrying.

Lou. (aside). He's hurrying ! that's splendid ; just what I want, for when you hurry you're certain to break something, and then you're ever so much longer.

Foll. (casting about for a subject of conversation that will interest Loulou). Have you much time for reading ?

Lou. Rather !

Foll. You read mostly serious authors, I suppose ?

Lou. Authors who mostly regard themselves seriously—yes.

Foll. What are you reading just now ?

Lou. *Emile*.

Foll. (with a start). What ?

Lou. You are shocked ?

Foll. (politely). No—but——

Lou. Yes, I see you are shocked.

Foll. As I told you before, Miss Loulou, I'm an ill-tempered old fogey, and——

Lou. Why are you ill-tempered ?

Foll. I don't know !

Lou. Perhaps it's because you have a bad digestion ?

Foll. If it's all the same to you, I would rather be so without a motive.

Lou. (aside). There's another mistake. (*Aloud.*) Well, and so you think it odd that I should read *Emile* ?

Foll. I think nothing at all. I do not know how to bring up little girls.

Lou. (offended, aside). Why not infants ?

Foll. (continuing). I am something of a misanthrope——

Lou. (who has "little girls" on her mind). Misanthrope? Oh, yes! Molière and Louis XIV. talked like that. What is a misanthrope?

Foll. He's a man——

Lou. (interrupting). Well, I know that much. You don't want big words to tell me that in. (*Delighted, aside.*) There, that's caught him nicely. (*Aloud.*) I beg your pardon, I say what I think.

Foll. (bowing). I'm convinced of it.

Lou. (with emphasis). Because I'm a badly brought-up "little girl."

Foll. (protesting). Oh!

Lou. Yes, yes. Well-bred people say I'm brought up *à la* American; others say right out that I'm ill-behaved.

Foll. But I say nothing.

Lou. No, but inwardly you do. It's impossible that you, a man whom everybody flatters, everybody respects, should find nothing extraordinary in my way of talking to you.

Foll. Respect is hard! So I'm respected.

Lou. You know you are. All the ladies bow before you. Folleuil here, Folleuil there! No pleasure without Folleuil. There's only Folleuil who——

Foll. I'm truly delighted to hear that all the young ladies bow before me. I confess I haven't perceived it.

Lou. I didn't say "the young ladies," I said "the ladies"; the young ladies consider you old.

Foll. Ah! that doesn't surprise me!

Lou. The other day I almost quarrelled with them because of that! They laughed at me because I said you might very well—— (*She stops short.*)

Foll. (interested). I might very well, what?

Lou. Not you, but any one, no matter who, of forty——

Foll. Miss Loulou, your words lack clearness. I should

much like to know your opinion on "no matter who of forty?"

Lou. (confused). Well, I said that a gentleman of that age still counted.

Foll. He counts too much, alas!

Lou. But I think it a very nice age.

Foll. (smiling). Then, Miss Loulou, you're not romantic!

Lou. I haven't time, and then I learn so many things.

Foll. What things?

Lou. Well, practical things, positive things. I see Diane's¹ friends. They're not at all like me. They are languid, sentimental, mysterious girls. I'm sure that even if I had time, I should never be like that.

Foll. But all the same, Miss Loulou, haven't you sometimes thought of—of—— (*Aside.*) How difficult it is to talk to little girls!

Lou. Of what?

Foll. Of things of the heart.

Lou. Of love, you mean.

Foll. Yes. (*Aside.*) I did not dare to call it by its name.

Lou. Why, of course I've thought of it. Firstly, it comes into my books, in Racine, in Paul and Virginia, in Molière, even in Corneille, who is very slow all the same.

Foll. Well?

Lou. Well, I find that—in books—love isn't simple enough. It's complicated, pretentious. I should like something good-humoured, nice, caressing, and there seems to be nothing but wreaths, fatalities, laments! I think love ought not to consist of affectations, nor even of words——

Foll. Indeed! And of what should it consist?

Lou. I don't exactly know; I am trying to discover? (*A slight, sharp noise is heard in the next room, then Papa's voice, "Damn! as if it isn't enough to be in a hurry."*)

¹ Her sister, aged twenty, engaged to be married.

Lou. (delighted, aside). He has broken his braces! What luck! he'll be obliged to look for another pair, and that'll delay him, and so there's five minutes to the good!

Foll. (continuing the conversation). You'll know all about that later on, Miss Loulou; there's plenty of time.

Lou. Oh yes, that's true! (*Thoughtfully.*) It's all the same, yet it ought to be amusing to be loved, even if it's of no use.

Foll. (smiling). You'll be a very practical little woman; you've got sense.

Lou. (modestly). Yes, I'm no fool. (*A pause.*) But I should like affection as well—at need.

Papa (entering). Here I am.

Lou. (disappointed, aside). Already! How has he managed?

Foll. Well, you were a nice time dressing, I must say.

Lou. (aside). How rude he is! (*Aloud.*) Why, papa, have you already changed your braces?

Foll. Changed my braces? No; why should I have changed them?

Lou. Ah! I hop—— (*Remembering herself.*) I thought you had broken your braces. There was a little noise, and I heard you swear.

Papa (protesting). I didn't swear. (*To Follueil.*) Has the little one been good?

Foll. Miss Loulou has been charming—as she always is.

Papa. She gets more and more unendurable every day!

Lou. That's not astonishing, since I'm growing.

Foll. Be quiet; she's exceedingly amusing—and—— (*He finishes his sentence turning to papa.*)

Lou. (annoyed, aside). What is he saying? What is he saying?—that I shall be the joy of the twentieth century. Why does he say that?

Foll. (to papa). Come, be quick; we are absurdly late!

Papa. All right. (*He pushes Folleuil to the door, and goes out with him.*)

Lou. (*disgusted, returning to her writing.*) And he did not even give me a look as he went out.

LOULOU AT THE BALL.

(*It is a fancy-dress ball, and Loulou wears a shepherdess's costume. She is dancing with M. d'Ulster.*)

M. d'Ulster (*stopping.*) Heavens! how well you valse! (*He looks at her with admiration.*) And what a pretty costume!

Lou. Mamma feared it was a little too—too—well, not enough like Florian; but I wanted it like this, and at length she gave in.

Ulster. Is it possible that she could refuse you anything?

Lou. I should think it is possible just! Why, they're always doing it!

Ulster. Well, I'm sure I could never refuse you anything.

Lou. Then I'm sorry I'm not your daughter.

Ulster (*aside.*) My daughter is hard. (*Aloud.*) You must have been told over and over again this evening that you are pretty!

Lou. (*laughing.*) No, indeed. No one said so. Pretty! Am I pretty then?

Ulster (*taken aback.*) Of course you are. I don't see anything to laugh at.

Lou. But I do. (*She laughs heartily.*) Well, so I'm pretty! Is it a Greek style of beauty? (*She bursts out laughing.*)

Ulster (*disconcerted.*) But, really, I——

Lou. (*behaving.*) Yes, it's true. I beg your pardon for laughing, for indeed it's very nice of you to say so, even if you don't mean it.

Ulster. But I swear to you——

Lou. (*bursting out laughing again.*) No, no, don't swear.

Swearing, you see, doesn't go with my style of beauty. Come, let's dance. (*They dance.*)

Ulster (aside, stopping). This little girl fetches me, positively fetches me! I must get invited to the Presles' house. I'll tell De Presles frankly how it is, and then we'll see. (*He looks tenderly and fixedly at Loulou for a long time.*)

Lou. (aside, blinking her eyes). I don't know what's the matter with me. It must be very late.

Ulster (noticing the blinking). You are not ill, I hope?

Lou. (struggling against the feeling). No.

Ulster (anxiously). What is the matter with you?

Lou. (confidentially, taking his arm to go back to her place). Well, I'll tell you: I think I'm rather sleepy.

Ulster (disgusted). ! ! ! ! ! ! !

Gyp.

THE BEGINNING OF THE HONEYMOON.

(*In a coupé of the Strasburg express. Paulette, Monsieur d'Alaly. Rugs, bags, etc. A big bouquet of white lilac.*)

(*The train moves slowly out of the station. Paulette is busily arranging the contents of a little leather bag. M. d'Alaly comes as near her as the division between the seats allows. Paulette looks up.*)

M. d'Alaly (tenderly). At last we are alone, my darling Paulette. How happy I am! And you, are you happy too?

Paulette (calmly). Of course, of course.

M. d'Alaly. Now you are my very own. I may worship you and tell you so. Ah! look at me so—again, again—for ever. Ah! how I love your big innocent eyes. (*He tries to kiss her, but finds her big hat in the way; he draws back rubbing his eyes.*)

Paul. (smiling). Ah ! did my hat hurt your eye? These hats are not encouraging. (*She laughs.*)

M. d'Alaly (trying to laugh also). Tell me, are you very anxious to keep your hat on?

Paul. (taking off her hat). Oh ! not at all.

M. d'Alaly (kneeling in front of her). How fresh and pure you are, Paulette ! Do you love me just a little bit?

Paul. Why, certainly, Monsieur.

M. d'Alaly (beseechingly). What ! you still call me "Monsieur." I hoped, however—I thought I had a right to hope——

Paul. Well, as you have mentioned it, I had better tell you something which—but promise you won't be angry.

M. d'Alaly (kissing her). I swear. I promise everything you can possibly wish so long as you consent to call me Joseph.

Paul. (hesitating). That's just the hitch.

M. d'Alaly (with surprise). The hitch?

Paul. (with decision). I do not wish to call you Joseph, because it's such an absurd name. You must change it.

M. d'Alaly. But I see nothing absurd in the name Joseph.

Paul. Indeed, don't you? Well, so much the worse for you.

M. d'Alaly. Now, if my name was Gontran, or Arthur, or Agenor, I could understand your repugnance to call me by any of those appellations ; but Joseph is such a simple sort of name, without pretension, a name like Paulette——

Paul. I know I should not be able to love any one whose name was Joseph.

M. d'Alaly (to himself). Since she speaks in the conditional, it's not quite decided. That's a comfort.

Paul. (leaning up against him, coaxingly). Say that you'll change your name. What can it matter to you? You've another name besides that.

M. d'Alaly. Yes, Antoine.

Paul. I don't like that name either. Haven't you any others?

M. d'Alaly. My full name is Marie-Joseph-Antoine. You don't want to call me Marie, I suppose?

Paul. (dryly). No. I shan't call you by any of the three.

M. d'Alaly (trying to turn it off in a joke). Well, you are certainly hard to please. You must be very careful in choosing your children's names, lest when they are grown up they should be placed in my predicament.

M. d'Alaly. Kiss me, won't you, Paulette?

Paul. With pleasure. Take care you don't sit on my hat. It would be safer to put it up in the net. (*M. d'Alaly takes the hat, which is already crushed out of shape.*) Ah! it's too late. It's quite flattened out, and the flowers are all spoiled.

M. d'Alaly. Never mind, we'll buy another *en route*.

Paul. Yes, at Chalons! A stylish sort of hat you'll get there!

M. d'Alaly. No matter how ugly it is, you'll lend it beauty. A mere nothing would adorn you——

Paul. You think so? Well, I can't say I agree with you. And since we are on the subject, suppose we discuss my dress allowance.

M. d'Alaly (sorrowfully). Oh! You surely don't mean that at this moment you wish——

Paul. Why not? It will then be disposed of for good.

M. d'Alaly. You know you can have whatever you want. You will be reasonable, and I——

Paul. No. I had best tell you at once that I'm not at all reasonable. I want first an allowance of my own.

M. d'Alaly. That's exactly what I intend, and I think that 25,000 francs——

Paul. You're saying that for a joke, aren't you?

M. d'Alaly (anxiously). For a joke?

Paul. Yes, offering me a ridiculous allowance like that.

M. d'Alaly. But, my darling, your mother herself fixed the sum, thinking it ample, more than enough——

Paul. Mamma!

M. d'Alaly. Yes, your mother, who when she was your age was much richer than we are, and was content with 10,000 francs.

Paul. Ah! but they didn't make the loves of things then that they do now—things that cost fabulous sums. And then mamma doesn't understand anything about it. In mamma's time people were virtuous, and didn't need all that.

M. d'Alaly (more and more uneasy). Ah!

Paul. I beg your pardon for resisting in this fashion, but—come, now, how would you like it if at the end of the year I was obliged to pawn my jewels in order to pay my dressmaker?

M. d'Alaly (greatly taken aback). Oh!

Paul. (taking no heed of his astonishment). You see, I know what's right. Such a thing would never do.

M. d'Alaly. I thought that 25,000 francs for a young woman who doesn't go out much——

Paul. (starting). You said?

M. d'Alaly. That 25,000 francs seems to me enough for a young woman——

Paul. (taking the words out of his mouth). "Who doesn't go out much." Why did you say, "Who doesn't go out much?"

M. d'Alaiy. Because I intend, being newly married——
(*Perceiving that he is on the wrong tack.*) Of course we shall do exactly as you like about that.

Paul. Ah! what a relief! (*Bending over to him prettily.*)

M. d'Alaly (kissing her). My darling! (*To himself.*) What will she ask next, I wonder? It is not at all as I

imagined. (*Aloud.*) Forgive my surprise, but I so rarely met you in society that I thought——

Paul. That I didn't care for it. Why, I adore it! Only not just that into which we went. Mamma's memory dates back to 1846, and so does her circle, I regret to say. You will easily understand that it wasn't particularly amusing. No brilliant balls, no theatre parties, no cosy five o'clock teas——

M. d'Alaly. Do you like five o'clock teas? Do all your young married friends have them?

Paul. Yes, for their ordinary visitors.

M. d'Alaly. Ah! ordinary! And what about the—others?

Paul. The others? Oh, you fix some earlier hour, say two o'clock.

M. d'Alaly (with emphasis). For lady friends?

Paul. Ladies or gentlemen, as the case may be.

M. d'Alaly. I do not quite understand. Are you not aware that there are husbands, many husbands, who never permit their wives to receive visits—thus intentionally isolated?

Paul. Oh yes, I know that. Naturally those husbands are numerous, for they are fools.

M. d'Alaly. Indeed. Perhaps you will kindly explain why?

Paul. Gladly. When a woman is forbidden to receive M. X. at a time when she is not at home to every one else, if she is obedient she does not receive him. But then she goes to call on him, and that's the surest way to hasten the *dénouement*—a *dénouement* that would probably never have taken place had the husband allowed them time to become better acquainted——

M. d'Alaly (completely dumfounded). There's some sense in that. But tell me, Paulette, how did you learn all that?

Paul. (naïvely). Why, when I heard that something had

happened, I sought the reason. But I am wrong to speak out my thoughts to you in this way.

M. d'Alaly. No, no. (*Resignedly to himself:*) I had better know where I am. And then she's so distractingly pretty that I haven't the heart to scold her. Listen, Paulette. We'll increase your allowance, but you must make a small concession.

Paul. What?

M. d'Alaly. You must be contented with a dressmaker. You must not have your gowns made by a man. I call that revolting.

Paul. Oh, no. I don't agree with you at all. Besides, to my thinking, a tailor isn't a man.

M. d'Alaly. But that's no reason why——

Paul. (continuing). He's a sexless being.

(*By this time the train moves into Chalons station.*)

Gyp.

FORBIDDEN LITERATURE.

[SCENE—*Fribourg, a fortnight after the wedding-day.*]

M. d'Alaly (hat and gloves in hand). Won't you come out, Paulette?

Paulette. No; why should I?

M. d'Alaly. For a walk—to see the town.

Paul. Seeing towns doesn't amuse me the least bit in the world. Besides, even if I did find it amusing, as we've done nothing else for a fortnight, I've every right to be heartily sick of it. At Strasburg you dragged me about the town in most unmerciful fashion. We went to the Zoological Gardens, we climbed the cathedral; you wouldn't let me off a stuffed lizard nor the tomb of Marshal Saxe. You made me see everything, and I dared not protest.

M. d'Alaly (smiling). While now?

Paul. Oh! well, if I didn't feel perfectly at home after a fortnight, things would be serious indeed.

M. d'Alaly. But if you don't care for it, I'm not particularly keen about staying here.

Paul. Oh, it isn't worse here than anywhere else in this benighted land! What would be really nice would be to go to the seaside.

M. d'Alaly. Already! But consider, Paulette, how absurd it would look, after saying we intended travelling for two months, to come back after a fortnight. People would think we were bored.

Paul. And you would rather be bored than that people should think it. Oh, how exceedingly well bred you are!

M. d'Alaly (tenderly). You're really as bored as all that, Paulette?

Paul. (with irritation). Well, I shouldn't feel bored if you'd leave me to read in peace, and go and see your monuments. Oh! it's horribly slow.

M. d'Alaly. But it was you who wanted to see the Rhine instead of going first to Switzerland, as had been decided.

Paul. I thought it would be more amusing, and would do instead of Switzerland. But if I've got to go to Switzerland afterwards, I'm sorry I said anything.

M. d'Alaly. But don't you find anything to admire in the castles of the Rhine?

Paul. Yes, but we've exhausted the castles, and you won't go to Baden, because you don't think it would be slow enough. Then we spent two days at Kehl staring at the bridge; two more at Carlsruhe contemplating the castle. I've had enough of it.

M. d'Alaly. But at Fribourg there's——

Paul. I know, I know—a magnificent cathedral. You want to show it me, and Mirabeau's tomb too. If it was only the real Mirabeau—but no, it's some one else!

M. d'Alaly. Paulette, do you know you haven't been out for two days, and it's so bad for your health? I hate leaving you alone, and yet, if I don't get a certain amount of fresh air, I shall be ill. I find exercise absolutely indispensable.

Paul. Then go out. It's quite natural.

M. d'Alaly. What will you do with yourself meanwhile?

Paul. What I did yesterday and the day before. I shall write to mamma, and then read.

M. d'Alaly. I'm almost inclined to give you a charming little book that you'll like immensely. (*He goes towards his room, then pauses and comes back.*) No, I want to read it with you. I bought it at Strasburg for that purpose.

Paul. Ah! I bought books at Strasburg too. What's yours?

M. d'Alaly. I'll tell you some day. No, stay, I'll tell you now, for if you'll let me, I'll stay at home with you. (*He goes to his room.*)

Paul. (looking after him). Poor fellow, he's very nice all the same. I'm sure that in his heart he regrets his beloved monuments. He adores monuments. A remarkably curious taste! But—so long as his book turns out amusing.

(*M. d'Alaly returns with a copy of Gustave Droz's "Monsieur, Madame, et Bébé." Paulette looks at the title and pulls a long face.*)

M. d'Alaly (surprised). Don't you like the title? I assure you the book's charming.

Paul. Yes, I know. I read it ages ago.

M. d'Alaly (dumfounded). You've read it?

Paul. Certainly. Not in the bound book, but in articles in *La Vie Parisienne*.

M. d'Alaly (in consternation). You were allowed to read *La Vie Parisienne*?

Paul. I didn't say I was allowed to read it; I said I read it. Have you never done anything you were forbidden to do?

M. d'Alaly (*hesitating*). Have I never done anything—— But I—— By Jove, there's all the difference in the world between you and me.

Paul. Of course. I expected that.

M. d'Alaly (*vexed*). Yes, yes; but there are certain things a young girl ought not to know.

Paul. What does it matter if she knows them so long as she doesn't abuse her knowledge?

M. d'Alaly (*following his own thoughts*). But however did you get hold of *La Vie Parisienne*? Surely your mother looked after your reading?

Paul. Oh, I can answer for that! I should just think she did look after it. It was in the country, at my aunt's. The papers were on the library table, and for that reason mamma never stirred out of the library, and for the same reason neither did I. Whenever I stayed two minutes in the same place mamma said, "You're not to read, Paulette. You may look at the pictures, but you mustn't read a word."

M. d'Alaly (*sternly*). And you carried the book off to your room to read it in peace and comfort?

Paul. I only wish I'd had the chance, but it wasn't possible. Everybody took off the papers to their rooms, and didn't come down again. So that my aunt had them chained to the big library table, and people had to read them there. The fact is that after luncheon they all buried their noses in the pages, and didn't stir again. Oh, it was so funny!

M. d'Alaly. Yes, but all that doesn't tell me how you managed to read it?

Paul. I? Oh! it's quite simple. I got up in the night and read in peace.

M. d'Alaly. But you must have been mad to do such a thing as that.

Paul. Oh dear no! Put yourself in my place. I saw

everybody reading the book with the intensest enjoyment, and mamma forbade me to read a single line. You can surely understand that it scarcely wanted so much——

M. d'Alaly. But I have been so counting on reading it with you, and pointing out the best bits to you.

Paul. Well, if you want to read, I've other books. I've one that's a perfect treasure. I've read it once, but if you like, I'll read it again with all the pleasure in the world. It's pretty, modern, and smart.

M. d'Alaly (anxiously). And what is this marvellous book?

Paul. (lifting the lid of a big trunk). There it is!

M. d'Alaly (making a grimace). Ah! you've read *Choses d'Amour*?

Paul. Yesterday. I don't want to disparage *Monsieur, Madame, et Bébé*, but I prefer this style.

M. d'Alaly (meaningly). As you said just now, it's more modern.

Paul. (taking no notice, enthusiastically turning over the leaves). If you only knew how one feels, as if one had lived it all. It's about a woman, who, in order to get herself invited to a ball, has three lovers—and, take heed, a virtuous woman, otherwise there'd be nothing remarkable in having three lovers; it would be quite according to real life. (*She goes on looking through it.*) *I must have two!* Oh! how delightful it is, and how realistic!

M. d'Alaly (extremely vexed). Yes, so realistic? but——

Paul. (surprised). You know *Choses d'Amour*?

M. d'Alaly. Yes; and I don't say it's not realistic, but I'm astonished that you should be able to judge of such things.

Paul. (reassuringly). Oh! I only speak categorically, not from experience.

M. d'Alaly (furious). It only wanted that. (*Aside.*)

What else has she been reading these last two days? (*Aloud.*) Have you bought many books of that sort?

Paul. (returning to her trunk). Of that sort? Alas, no! It's the only one that was amusing. I have *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. (*M. d'Alaly starts.*) Oh! I only began it; I found it dull.

M. d'Alaly (losing control over himself). Wasn't it modern enough?

Paul. (surprised). Any one would think you were angry? Is it about the books? But it's surely quite natural that I should choose real books. I didn't get married to read Walter Scott.

Gyp.

BOB AT HOME.

(*Bob, aged eight, is sitting on the lawn in the garden, talking to his dog, and making him admire all the things he takes out of his inexhaustible pockets.*)

(*A gentleman gets out of a carriage at the gate.*)

Bob. Are you coming here, Monsieur?

The Gentleman. Yes.

Bob (quickly). Don't ring, Monsieur, please; I'll open the gate for you. I like doing it, and as I'm forbidden to do it without good reason, why, don't you see, you are one. (*He lets the gentleman in.*)

Gent. Is your mother at home?

Bob. Mamma isn't dressed, and there's some one with her.

Gent. ! ! !

Bob. But I'll go and see, all the same. Perhaps the dressmaker's gone. I'll go and see. (*He returns in a second.*) Mamma hopes you'll come in, Monsieur. (*They go into the drawing-room.*) And, Monsieur, you may sit

down, and me too. Mamma told me to come with you till she's ready, so I must stay here.

Gent But I don't want to deprive you of your game. What were you doing when I came in?

A handwritten scribble consisting of several diagonal lines, with a single vertical line ending in an arrowhead pointing upwards.

"MAMMA HOPES YOU'LL COME IN, MONSIEUR!"

Bob. Oh, nothing particular. I was playing with Leon.

Gent. Your brother?

Bob. No; mamma's dog. My brother is Fred.

Gent. And you, what's your name?

Bob. I'm Bob; that's to say my name is Robert, but

everybody calls me Bob. Just like Fred; he's not Fred, but Frederic.

Gent. And where's Monsieur Fred?

Bob. At lessons. It'll be my turn directly.

Gent. And are you very learned, Monsieur Bob?

Bob. Oh, not very, you know. Writing bores me horribly; as for the rest, it isn't bad—except the catechism. But you mustn't say I told you, because I should be scolded.

Gent. Indeed! you don't mean to say you're ever scolded?

Bob. Oh, but I am! This very morning I was well scolded twice.

Gent. How was that?

Bob. Well, the first time was for thirteen faults in four lines. The second was for giving something to a poor man—through the window.

Gent. What! you were scolded for giving something to a poor man? And what did you give him?

Bob. That was just it. I threw my cup of chocolate out to him from the second storey—I was up there. And it seemed that it didn't do him any good; on the contrary, it made him wet, and he called me a wicked little boy. I was not naughty. We were at breakfast, and he was crying out from below: "I'm hungry! I've had nothing to eat!"
(*He imitates the beggar.*)

Gent. (laughing). Well, it certainly was a capital idea to throw your cup of chocolate out of the window.

Bob. Mamma didn't think so.

Gent. (racking his brains for a subject of conversation). And what are you learning now, Monsieur Bob?

Bob. A heap of things; but I don't care to talk about them out of lesson time.

Bob. Don't you think mamma is a very long time?

Gent. Time could never seem long in your society, Monsieur Bob.

Bob. We've looked at the photographs enough, haven't we? Let's talk now.

Gent. With pleasure.

Bob. Tell me something—a tale.

Gent. No, Monsieur Bob; you tell me something, whatever you like.

Bob. What shall it be? Tom Thumb? or would you prefer Robinson Crusoe or William Tell? Say, shall it be William Tell?

Gent. I know that story. I would rather hear you talk about things—more up to date.

Bob (considering). More up to date. Politics then?

Gent. (laughing). Well, politics, if you like. Do you often talk politics, Monsieur Bob?

Bob. I! oh, no. Not often; it's the others, you know—they always talk that.

Gent. And you listen?

Bob. Oh, no. But I take it in, all the same.

Gent. And what do you take in?

Bob. Names, particularly names. Are you in it?

Gent. In what?

Bob. In politics.

Gent. Oh dear no!

Bob. Well, I often hear grandfather say, "There's another man poking himself into politics," so I thought it was your profession like the others.

Gent. No, no, Monsieur Bob.

Bob. Tell me, then, what is your profession?

Gent. I haven't one.

Bob. How funny! I'm always being told that when I'm grown up I must have a profession—all young men have one; yet you—you haven't one? You're not an old man, however, and yet you are grown up, aren't you?

Gent. Certainly.

Bob. Then perhaps it is because you couldn't learn anything!

Gent. (laughing). Well, Monsieur Bob, without being a walking encyclopædia, I know most of the things one ought to know. But there are a great many people who, like me, have no profession. Why, there's your uncle, he has nothing to do.

Bob. Oh! but he has.

Gent. (surprised). Whatever is it?

Bob. He goes to the club.

Gent. Ah! capital! capital!

Bob. I don't know yet what profession I shall be. There are several that aren't half bad——

Gent. I'm certain you'll be a soldier.

Bob. Oh, no! because mamma says that officers become idiots at thirty, and I'd rather not be that till the usual age.

Gent. Yes, I can quite understand that.

Bob. I should rather like to be a magistrate, because of the beautiful red robes. I've seen them; but—no, I couldn't.

Gent. Why not?

Bob. Because uncle says that to be a magistrate, it's not enough to look stupid; you must behave properly, and you see I know what that means, and I shall never do it, never.

Gent. Well, Monsieur Bob, what does behaving properly mean?

Bob (suspicious). Just as if you don't know?

Gent. I assure you I should be very glad if you would tell me.

Bob. Well, then, it means never to make my clothes dirty, not to put my tongue out at people I ought to respect, not to let the dogs eat out of my plate, not to climb trees, not to cock up my legs, never to say what I think, always to wash my hands every time they're

dirty—well, to behave properly is to do everything you hate, and nothing you like. Isn't that it? Tell me.

Gent. I'm perfectly convinced that it is.

Bob. Do you behave properly?

Gent. Well, so, so.

Bob. Will you come and climb trees a bit? There's a capital fir tree down there.

Gent. Thank you; no—I——

Bob. There's an acacia also, with good branches, but acacias aren't to be trusted for sliding down, they're so knotty. Do you see this scratch? that's how I got it.

Gent. Which? You've quite a collection.

Bob. That one—the big one on this knee. Leon did those on the other leg, playing; and this one on my arm, do you see, I got trying to snatch the penholder from my tutor, the Abbé.

Gent. Oh! oh!

Bob (*calm and indifferent*). Oh! we often fight, you know.

Gent. But that's very naughty, Monsieur Bob.

Bob. There's mamma. I hear her coming. Good-bye. Now I can go.

(*He slips down from his chair and runs off in high glee.*)

Gyp.

THE DOCTOR AT SO MUCH PER CENT.

(DOCTOR RAPPASS, *fifty-five years of age ; a surgeon of great talent ; is reckoned among the "princes of science."*)

(DOCTOR DECHAR, *forty years of age, very clever ; a general practitioner.*)

(*They are coming down the staircase of a beautiful house in the Rue Monceau.*)

Déchar. Ouf ! I'm glad that's over.

Rappass (putting on his gloves). Why ?

D. (surprised). Why—because our patient was so weak I feared he would succumb during the operation.

R. Yes, so did I.

D. Indeed ? And yet you declared without hesitation that the operation must be done.

R. Of course. You must always operate—otherwise—you have regrets. (*He stops to fasten his glove.*) You say to yourself : " If I had acted resolutely, the man would have been cured."

D. (timidly). You might also say the contrary.

R. Oh ! the contrary. Well, you don't say it.

D. Ah !

R. (looking round him). Fine house ! These people are well off. I ought to have asked a bigger fee. That's your fault. Why did you ask me to do it for 6000 francs ?

D. Because the young man's mother told me she couldn't afford more.

R. They always say that, and then, when they despair of the man's life, they give all that's asked. I was a fool to believe you.

D. (out of countenance). I am truly grieved that——

R. Besides, you lose too——

D. (surprised). I lose ! I ?

DOCTOR DECHAR: "AND YET YOU DECLARED THE OPERATION MUST BE DONE?"

DOCTOR RAFFASS: "OF COURSE. YOU MUST ALWAYS OPERATE."

R. Damn it! (*They reach the street.*) Get into my carriage. We can settle our accounts.

D. (*nonplussed*). Our accounts?

R. (*continuing*). Yours can follow. (*He looks into the street.*) Stay! haven't you a carriage?

D. (*confused*). Yes, but—my wife——

R. (*satirically*). She makes use of it! of course! and you walk?

D. I generally take a cab.

R. It's the same thing.

D. (*aside*). I don't find it so.

R. Well, all the more reason that you should come with me. (*He opens the door, and makes Déchar get in, who is full of thanks.*) Where are you going?

D. (*timidly*). But—I—where are you going?

R. I'm going to the Duc de Granton's.

D. And so am I! (*Rappass starts.*) That is to say, I'm going to the door; I'll get out when you do. (*After a pause.*) What time will you see our patient to-morrow?

R. Our patient? Oh yes, of course I must see him, at least to-morrow. (*Crossly.*) It's a great nuisance!

D. (*imploringly*). Oh! my dear master, you will see him, won't you?

R. At five o'clock to-morrow. I can't do otherwise. One visit is indispensable.

D. (*in terror*). Only one? But the mother——

R. Well, the mother? She doesn't imagine, I presume, that I'm going to give her little one his breakfast every morning?

D. (*startled*). But——

R. It's already very nice of me to have done the operation at a reduction.

D. At a reduction?

R. Yes, at a reduction. One doesn't perform such operations as that for 6000 francs! It was making them a present of it.

D. ! ! ! ! !

R. Yesterday I did the same thing for 10,000. Ah! that reminds me that I ought to go and see if the patient—— (*He makes a sign.*)

D. (*interested*). Ah! Is it——?

R. Yes. I thought it next to impossible to revive him. X. called me in; he gave the chloroform, and seeing that the patient never moved a hair, I said to myself, "He's given him too much."

D. (*troubled*). Oh!

R. Why, confound it, it happens every day.

D. (*timidly protesting*). But——

R. Or at least very often. Accidents like that must happen now and then.

D. (*astounded*). Is it absolutely necessary?

R. Necessary is not the word—but still, they do happen—nothing can be done! (*A pause.*) Well, then, my poor Déchar, so you walk and Madame Déchar drives. Of course I understand. In all conscience, so pretty a woman can't walk—it would be scandalous—(*smiling*)—and dangerous! For indeed, my dear sir, it can't be denied that your wife is perfectly enchanting.

D. (*surprised*). You know her?

R. (*satirically*). I know her—without knowing her—I know her well by sight, a little by reputation.

D. (*anxiously*). By reputation?

R. (*cordially*). Of course. So charming a woman couldn't pass unnoticed. You see her—ask who she is——

D. Yes——

R. And when you know—you interest yourself in her—(*Déchar starts*)—that is to say, in her tastes, her habits——

D. (*more and more uneasy*). Why in her habits?

R. Well, so as to know where to meet her.

D. (*paralysed*). You mean to say?

R. I say that when you want to see again—(*movement on*

Déchar's part)—from a distance, be assured, a very pretty woman, you try to discover what she does, where she goes, in a word, you find out where to meet her ; isn't it quite natural?

D. And you have—met Madame Déchar?

R. That isn't the word—seen would be more accurate. Oh yes, I've had the pleasure of sometimes seeing Madame Déchar—at the opera—Mondays—in her box. That's her day, isn't it?

D. (briskly). My wife has no box! She goes with a friend. My modest income would not permit——

R. (kindly, with interest). What, your modest income! You haven't a large practice, then?

D. Oh, I'm certainly very busy, too much so, for some days I don't know which way to turn; but my patients belong to the middle class, and they don't pay much—sometimes not at all. I am seldom called in to patients like the man you've just operated on; that was due to an accident. I happened to be passing, and offered my assistance, and as their usual physician was away, the young man kept me on.

R. But you live in a well-to-do quarter of the town, a good situation——

D. Yes, but other doctors were there first, and they have the paying patients.

R. So much the worse! so much the worse! We always need money, and a young woman especially! Youth loves to spend, and youth is right. Have you any children?

D. (sadly). No.

R. Ah, you're a man of sense! Children are a fearful expense. I know something about that. Not that I have any myself; no! but I have nephews, and I know what they cost my sister. How much do you make a year?

D. (looking down). Twenty to twenty-five thousand francs.

R. Well, that's little enough to pay for your wife's gowns.

D. (jumping up). My wife's gowns! But we live on that.

R. Ah, well then, let's settle our accounts before we get to the Duke's.

D. But what accounts? You mentioned that word before, and I don't understand. (*Anxiously*). Do I owe you anything?

R. (taking a pocket-book from the inside pocket of his coat). On the contrary, it's I who owe you—(*He counts the six notes of a thousand francs that he has just received, and takes out two, which he hands to Dr. Déchar*)—this.

D. (astonished). You owe me this?

R. Why, certainly! Didn't you call me in——

D. Yes, but——

R. Well, my dear sir, it's my custom, and that of the greater number of my colleagues, to hand over a third of the fee to him who helped me gain it. It seems to me perfectly fair.

D. (with embarrassment). But I've sometimes called in—in serious cases, Dr. X., Dr. * * *, Dr. B., and never——

R. Well, that proves that they are stingy curmudgeons, that's all.

D. (twisting the two notes). Really, I—I don't know if——

R. (putting his pocket-book back in his pocket). Now, my dear sir, you annoy me greatly, and then another time when you call me in, I shouldn't come. I'm very straightforward in all business matters, and don't care to put myself out to lose my time like to-day——

D. (aside). He calls that losing his time. 6000 francs an hour, confound it.

R. (continuing). And I do not care to be under an obligation to any one. (*To Doctor Déchar, who continues to twist and turn the notes.*) Put them away.

D. (putting the notes into his pocket). I am truly embarrassed——

R. Why? to take what is due to you? Ah, well, my colleagues have a singular way of acting—but it doesn't astonish me. It's useless to tell them, to teach them the correct thing; they would talk of scandal, say we are doing harm to the profession. I am only sorry that you should have gained so trifling a sum——

D. (aside). He calls it a trifling sum! Why, I slave for two months to earn it.

R. (continuing). But, as I told you just now, it's a little bit your own fault. If I had asked ten thousand francs instead of six thousand—your commis—— (*recollecting himself*)—your share would have been much larger. I hope that another time we shall be more fortunate. There are sometimes very difficult operations, and consequently very dear. For instance, the other day that wretch of a C.—you know him, little C.—called me in to one of his patients, a young man who had been thrown in the riding-school—a real fall! Cranial fracture, bones driven in, cerebral compression; in fact, as bad as it could be; impossible to do anything but operate. Well, little C. wanted to operate himself,—the cur, he thinks himself capable of everything; but the parents hadn't confidence enough in him, and C. called me in. I did the operation. The boy was strong, and he recovered. I asked fifteen thousand, and the parents sent me the sum in an amazingly beautiful casket. I ought to have asked more. To be brief, then I gave C. six thousand, and if he'd done the operation himself he wouldn't have had the face to ask so much, and so he gained by calling me in. (*The carriage stops.*)

D. (mechanically). Evidently. (*They get out.*)

R. (going in to the house). When you need me I'm always at your service. You will always be the gainer, and sometimes perhaps your patients will be gainers too—one can never tell!

Gyp.

ONE WAY AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.

ONCE upon a time there was an uncle and a nephew.
Which was the uncle?

Why, which? The fattest, to be sure!

Uncles are fat, then?

Often.

But uncle Henry isn't fat.

Your uncle Henry isn't fat, because he's an artist.

Artists aren't fat, then?

You bother me. If you keep interrupting I can't go on with my story.

Well, I won't interrupt again.

Once upon a time there was an uncle and a nephew.
The uncle was very rich, very rich——

How much money had he?

Seventeen hundred thousand millions of francs a year, and houses, and carriages, and lands——

And horses?

To be sure, since he had carriages.

Boats; had he any boats?

Yes; fourteen.

Steam-boats?

There were three steam-boats; the others were sailing boats.

And did his nephew sail in the boats?

Be quiet. You hinder me telling the tale.

Go on, then; I won't hinder again.

The nephew, who hadn't a penny, a circumstance he found extremely tiresome——

Why didn't his uncle give him something?

Because his uncle was an old miser, and preferred to keep all his money for himself. Only, as his nephew was his sole heir——

What is an "heir"?

A person who takes your money, your furniture, and all your property when you are dead.

Then why didn't the nephew kill his uncle?

What! You're a nice creature, you are! He didn't kill his uncle, because under no circumstances, even to inherit his fortune, is it lawful to kill your uncle.

Why isn't it lawful to kill your uncle?

Because of the policemen.

But if the policemen didn't know it?

Policemen always know it; the *concierge* tells them. And, besides, you'll see the nephew was cleverer than that. He noticed that after every meal his uncle was red——

That's because he had eaten too much.

No; it was his constitution. He was apoplectic.

What is "aplopectic"?

Apoplectic? When the blood flies to the head, and you may die of any great excitement.

Am I apoplectic?

No, and you never will be. You haven't that sort of constitution. Then the nephew noticed that great bouts of merry-making made his uncle ill, and once he almost died of a fit of laughter.

Laughter can cause death, then?

Yes, when you're apoplectic. One fine day the nephew called on his uncle just as he was getting up from table. Never had he dined so well. He was as red as a turkey cock, and blew like a seal——

Like the seals in the Zoological Gardens?

Those are not seals; they're otaries. The nephew said to himself, "This is the very moment," and he began to tell a funny story——

Tell it me.

Wait a moment; I'll tell it you afterwards. The uncle listened to the story, and he laughed so immoderately that he was dead before the story was quite finished.

What was the story?

Wait a minute. Then when the uncle was dead, they buried him, and the nephew inherited——

He got the boats, too?

He got everything, since he was the sole heir.

But what was the story he told his uncle?

Why, the one I've just told you.

Which one?

That of the uncle and nephew.

Go along, you humbug!

And what are you, then, pray?

Alphonse Allais.

THE CAUTIOUS CRIMINAL.

WITH an instrument (made in America), something like that used for opening tinned provisions, the malefactor made two incisions in the iron shutter of the shop-front, one vertical, the other horizontal, and starting from the same point.

With a vigorous pull he took hold of the triangle of metal thus marked out, twisting it as easily as if it had been a sheet of tinfoil. (He was a robust malefactor.)

He made his way into the little rectangular hall before the shop door.

Then with the help of a Cape diamond he cut the plate glass with its ventilator (made in America).

There was no longer any obstacle to his entering the shop. Then quietly, methodically, he filled a bag with all the precious stones and jewellery that added the merit of great value to that of small size.

He had almost finished his task when M. Josse, the proprietor of the shop, appeared, a candle in one hand, a revolver in the other.

The malefactor bowed politely, and said affably: "I wouldn't pass so near your house without saying good morning."

And as, unsuspecting, the goldsmith was shaking his hand, the malefactor plunged a homicidal knife (made in America) into his heart.

The bag was swiftly filled.

The malefactor was about to re-enter the street when an idea struck him.

Sitting down at the desk, he wrote a few words in big letters on a large sheet of paper.

He stuck the placard, by means of wafers, on the shop

front, and matutinal passers-by might read in the twilight of the dawn—

“Closed in consequence of Proprietor’s demise.”

Alphonse Allais.

IRONY.

[T was a tavern in the purest Louis-Philippe style.

It is difficult to imagine a more lugubrious or unfashionable place.

The tables, of a yellowed marble, spread themselves out innocent of drinkers.

At the back an old billiard-table looks like a mouldy catafalco, and the three balls (even the red), of the same yellow colour as the tables, make as lively a spectacle as the forgotten bones of dead men.

In a corner a small group of customers, who seemed to belong *to the period*, played an interminable game of dominoes; the dice and their fingers rattled like skeletons. Now and again the old fellows speak, and all their sentences begin with: *In our time*.

At the desk, behind antiquated cordials and out-of-date brandy bottles, the proprietress presides, sad and dried up, with long curls of the same pale yellow as the tables and the billiard balls.

The waiter, an ancient, bald-headed personage, who was very friendly with the proprietress (he must have been a long time in her employ), hovers round the empty tables like a soul in pain.

Then three young men enter who had evidently mistaken their way.

The domino players and the waiter receive them with hostile glances. But the lady at the desk sports a vague smile, perhaps retrospective.

She remembered that in days gone by young men were to be welcomed.

The new-comers, somewhat disconcerted by the chill surroundings, sat down.

Suddenly one of them went up to the desk, and said with the most exquisite politeness: "Madame, it may happen that we shall die of laughter in your establishment. Should such an accident occur, may we ask you to be good enough to forward our corpses to our respective families. Here are our addresses."

Alphonse Allais.

THE VIOLIN.

WALKING the other day down the *Rue de Provence*, I stopped by chance at a curiosity shop, and raising my eyes found it was that of good Madame Manchaballe, the mother of the little Manchaballes of the ballet. Manchaballe the second still needs filling out; but Manchaballe the first is superb. However, you must not imagine that that fact induced me to turn the handle of the door leading into the shop. No, I wanted to consult Madame Manchaballe about the purchase of a bracelet, when my attention was drawn to a violin of antique aspect.

"Ah! Madame Manchaballe, you sell musical instruments. Is that another string to your bow? or do you intend making Monsieur Pluque a present?"

"Not at all, Monsieur Richard, not at all. I am not one of those mothers who try to influence the professors. I know what Judith is worth, and what Rebecca promises to be. I shall quietly await whatever fortune may have in store for my daughters. No, that violin is a good deed I tried to do."

I opened my eyes wide. I do not know why, but I

could not imagine Madame Manchaballe doing a good deed ; I could not conceive her in such a position.

"Yes," she continued ; " I sympathise with your surprise. And after all my act of charity was a failure, and I shan't try it again, I promise you. How much do *you* take the violin to be worth ? "

I examined the instrument, which looked to me like a child's plaything, somewhat the worse for wear, and I replied without the least hesitation—

"I think it's worth—well, a dozen francs, all told."

"Well, it cost me four hundred francs."

I jumped off my chair thinking it some amusing jest, but I noticed that behind her spectacles Madame Manchaballe's eyes were wet with tears.

I am very soft-hearted, and if I see a crocodile weep, especially a lady crocodile, it touches me. I seized the old croco—I beg her pardon—Madame Manchaballe's hands, and said—

"Come, tell me all about it ; you'll feel better then."

"Ah ! Monsieur Richard, you reopen the wound, but I can refuse you nothing. Well, one freezing morning Judith and Rebecca had swallowed their breakfast, and had started arm-in-arm for the eight o'clock class. I was dusting my china,—I'm the only woman who understands the art of dusting ; it cannot be taught, it's a gift. I believe that my light hand accounts for the lightness of my daughter's legs,—when suddenly I see a little beggar-girl, pretty, by Jove, very pretty even in her dirty rags. Ah ! youth does not know its value ! She enters, violin in hand, and asks alms. I refuse. It is one of my principles never to give to the poor I don't know, or even to those I do know. But the child began to sob—

" ' Madame, have pity. It's to buy a bit of sausage for mamma, who is very hungry. At ten o'clock, when people

are more awake, I sing in the streets, and then at noon I'll return the money. But, if you like, I can sing without accompaniment. So lend me twenty sous, and I'll leave you my violin in pledge, a very old violin that I had from my great-grandfather, and which I wouldn't part with for the whole world; so you've nothing to fear.' Well, I didn't risk much. I kept the violin and lent the twenty sous."

"I beg your pardon, Madame Manchaballe, you said four hundred francs——"

"Don't be impatient. About eleven o'clock a gentleman arrived who looked like some great diplomat. Oh! I can tell you he could not have made a better impression. He glances at my Renaissance Venus, my Louis Quinze clock, and suddenly stops at the violin. He takes it, feels it, listens to it, taps the case, and then says—

" 'You've a real Stradivarius there!'

" 'Impossible!'

" 'It's so possible that I'll buy it of you for five hundred francs.'

"I felt quite giddy.

" 'But the instrument isn't mine. It was only left here by an artist, who, it seems, will not part with it. He inherited it from his great-grandfather. However, he seemed very poor, and I lent him a few pence. In short, I've no doubt the matter can be arranged.'

" 'Look here, Madame, get me the Stradivarius for five hundred francs, and there will be two hundred francs commission for you. It will cost me thirty-five louis; but bah! I can well afford such follies, and I'm sure to make a good thing out of it.'

" 'Very well, Monsieur,' I reply. 'Come back this afternoon; I'll speak to the artist.'

"And about noon my artist returns.

"I must be just; she brought me the twenty sous.

“‘I am honest, Madame, and I thank you very much. Here is your money. Give me my violin!’”

“‘My dear,’ I say, ‘I’ve a proposal to make you that will overwhelm you with joy. I know an old gentleman who wants to buy your violin for three hundred francs.’”

“I beg pardon for interrupting, Madame Manchaballe, but you said five hundred francs.”

“That is true, Monsieur; but you may make a mistake, even to your own advantage, and it seemed to me that fifteen louis was a very fair sum for the little good-for-nothing. I thought she would jump for joy. It was a fortune from the clouds for her, but she made a great fuss. She stuck to her instrument; it came to her from her great-grandfather; so that, to my deep regret, I had to go up to four hundred francs. I still had a little honorarium of five louis.”

“Without reckoning the two hundred francs commission.”

“Just so, not reckoning the commission. But business is business, and Rebecca and Judith cost me more than they earn—at least, just for the moment. At last my beggar makes up her mind, and as for reasons of my own, I did not wish her to meet the diplomat, I advanced the four hundred francs, and kept the Stradivarius.”

“Well, Madame Manchaballe?”

“Well, Monsieur, it was all a plant. Good God! who is to be trusted if you can’t put your confidence in people who look so highly respectable? The old gentleman was a notorious thief, and the little beggar girl was his accomplice, for I’ve not set eyes on either of them again, and I’ve the violin still on my hands.”

Richard O’Monroy.

THE FUGUE.

WISHING to keep the National Fête in some out-of-the-way corner of Normandy, I was striding up and down the hall of the Saint-Lazare Station, when I heard an inharmonious feminine voice address me—inharmonious but feminine.

“Monsieur Richard! Monsieur Richard!”

I turned round. It was my friend Madame Manchaballe, in a travelling costume consisting of an old Surah dust-cloak, trimmed with black lace that had formerly done duty at Aix with Rebecca—I knew it again—and a Leghorn hat with a heap of flowers and two pink ibis wings. However vivid your imagination may be, I defy you to picture to yourself Madame Manchaballe’s head adorned with two pink ibis wings. You ought to have seen it, for it is a never-to-be-forgotten spectacle.

“Where are you off to, my dear Madame?”

“I’m going to join my youngest, Caroline, at Houlgate, where we have a little cottage on the Corniche.”

“Caroline? Ah, yes! she goes in for singing. Well, are the Conservatoire examinations over?”

“They’re over,” groaned Madame Manchaballe, “they’re over, but they never began for us.”

“Impossible!”

“Ah, Monsieur, a piece of flagrant injustice! We did not even go in for them. And yet Caroline has a nice voice. Don’t you remember the evening she sang the valse from *Faust*—

‘Ah, how I love to see myself look so nice in this mirror!’

and then the great recitative—

‘I should much like to know who that young man was?
If he is a great noble, and how much he gives——’”

"Those are not exactly the words, Madame Manchaballe."

"Yes, but it's the meaning. In operas words are of no importance. Well, if you remember you were surprised yourself, and cried: 'The deuce! Your daughter has made great progress. I will recommend her to my friend Victorien Sardou.'"

"Joncières, I said Joncières."

"Well, they're both Victorien, so where's the difference? I didn't let the grass grow under my feet. Not only did I give her lessons from Madame Saxe, but I made her call on all the members of the jury without me. At first I wanted to go with her, but she said I made her nervous, and that she sang better when I wasn't there. So I did not insist."

"I think you were quite right, Madame Manchaballe."

"Yes, yes. And besides I was busy also. I went to the meetings of the *Concert Vatoire*. A funny sort of concert, if you like! A queer room, half theatre, half study. The stage, with its two chairs and one door, looked like a *concierge's* lodge, and a poor *concierge* too. Not a decoration, not a piece of furniture, not an ornament on the bare walls, painted red, the colour of raw beef. It seems that this simple and bare background is good for judging gesture, pose, and play of feature. Well, I didn't mind. The three boxes opposite were replaced by a long table of severe aspect, behind which the members of the jury were seated, with the President in the centre, all getting grey, short-sighted, and not handsome at all. Such beards, such heads of hair! Why do all musicians have such extraordinary heads of hair? Perhaps music is good for the hair."

"I think you are straying from the point, Madame Manchaballe. I want to hear about Caroline."

"Just so, I'm coming to it. In short, one day I arrived late at the end of the meeting, and heard that Mdlle. Terville had the first prize for her fugue, an unheard-of

fugue, an extraordinary fugue, a marvellous fugue, that literally carried the jury away. And all round me I heard the critics exclaiming: 'What a fugue! Ah, my dear fellow, what a magnificent fugue!' In order not to seem out of it, I said the same, smiling like the rest. But in fact—don't laugh at me, Monsieur Richard—I hadn't the least idea what a fugue was. So far, with Judith and Rebecca, I have only had to do with dancing. With *pirouettes* and the like I was quite at home, but I had never heard a mention of fugues. So that, as soon as I got out into the vestibule, I went up to Madame Chapuzot, Stella Chapuzot's mother, who is in the same class as Caroline, so that Madame Saxe always said: 'If Stella doesn't make a success at the opera first, it will be Caroline.' Well, Madame Chapuzot was very jealous of us. I ought to have been on my guard, but I thought all would be right between mothers. So I went up to her and said: 'Mdlle. Terville had a great success with her fugue—that is to say, she's cock-sure of the prize. And,' I went on, 'since I wasn't there, it would be very kind of you to tell me what a fugue is, because—you see, I'd make Caroline prepare one.'"

"Then Madame Chapuzot began to laugh, and so loudly that everybody turned round to look at us. I laughed too, for company's sake, but without exactly knowing why. Suddenly Madame Chapuzot became serious, and said: 'A fugue, Madame Manchaballe, is to make yourself scarce just at the moment when it would be least expected. Thus, you are to sing in the evening at the Opera Comique. At eight o'clock exactly you decamp to Italy: that's a fugue. Then the terrified directors, in order to bring you back, prefer either to increase your salary or to give you a prize. That is what was done in the case of Mdlle. Terville.' I thought it rather extraordinary. But the same evening I met by chance at the opera one of our former tenants, M. Jules Claretie, who is a member of the Academy, and

consequently understands the French language, and I said to him: 'Monsieur Claretie, if a person had to sing at the Opera Comique at half-past eight, and at eight decamped to Italy, would that be a fugue?' 'Certainly,' replied the Academician, with perfect politeness, 'that would be a fugue.'"

"I hesitated no longer. I waited for the day of the competition, and then, hey presto! without a word of warning, I packed Caroline off to Houlgate. She objected, but I said, 'Leave all to your mother, it's for your good.' I went to the concert-hall, and when Caroline's name was called, I stood up and said: 'She's doing a fugue. She's in her cottage at the seaside.'

"'Good,' replied the President.

"And he summoned the next, Stella Chapuzot. And she passed, and Caroline was plucked. Now, isn't it disgraceful, sir? I ought not to have trusted Madame Chapuzot; but, honestly now, could I mistrust Monsieur Claretie? Such a distinguished man! Put it into the papers, will you? It will prove to the Government that, say what they like, there's no equality yet; and that what succeeds for one is fatal to another. But there's my train. Good-bye, Monsieur Richard."

"A pleasant journey, Madame Manchaballe!"

Richard O'Monroy.

HOW WE BORE OURSELVES.

(FROM "LE MONDE OU L'ON S'ENNUIE.")

Paul. Madame de Céran's is one of the three or four most influential houses in Paris. We have come here to enjoy ourselves. We arrive sous-prefect, and must depart prefect. Everything depends on her, on us, on you!

Jeanne (his newly-wedded wife). On me? How is that?

Paul. Why, certainly. Society judges a man by his wife, and very rightly. So you must be on your guard. Serious but not haughty, a smile full of thought, observe much, listen much, speak little. As many compliments as you like. Quotations are useful, short but profound; in philosophy, Hegel; in literature, Jean Paul; in politics——

Jeanne. But I don't talk politics.

Paul. All the women here talk politics.

Jeanne. I don't know anything about them.

Paul. Neither do they. But that's of no consequence; do it all the same. Talk of Puffendorf and Macchiavelli as if they were your nearest relatives, and of the Council of Trent as if you'd presided at it. Now for your amusements: chamber music, a turn in the garden, whist—that's all I can allow. High bodices and the one or two Latin words I've taught you, and before a week's over people will say,

“Ah! little Madame Raymond ought to
live.” And in this circle,
it's said of a woman
her husband
early a minister.

What's that? You
be a minister?

Paul. Hang it! So
as not to be remarked.

Jeanne. But since
Madame de Céran be-
longs to the opposition,
what place do you hope
to gain through her?

Paul. Oh, you little
innocent! As to places,
my child, there's very
little difference between
the Conservatives and

their opponents. The Conservatives ask for places, and their opponents accept them. No, no, it is here that reputations, situations, and elections are made, unmade, and overmade, and that shrewd men gain their ends by pretensions to culture. It's the side-door to the ministry, the ante-room of the Academy, the laboratory of success!

Jeanne. Good gracious! What sort of society do you call that?

Paul. A nineteenth century Hôtel de Rambouillet. A society in which people talk and pose, in which pedantry holds the place of knowledge, sentimentality of sentiment, and affectation of refinement; in which no one says what he believes, or believes what he says; in which constancy is a policy, friendship a calculation, and love-making a means; a society in which you yawn yourself ill in the ante-room, and are bored to death in the drawing-room—in a word, serious society!

Jeanne. But the society you describe is nothing less than perfect boredom.

Paul. Exactly.

Jeanne. But if it bores you to such a degree, what influence can it have?

Paul. What influence! *Ennui*, here in France? Immense! Important! A Frenchman's horror of *ennui* almost amounts to veneration. He regards *ennui* as a terrible god who insists on being worshipped by a formal solemn sort of life. That's the only way in which a Frenchman understands serious matters. I do not say he puts such a rule of life into practice, but for all that he firmly believes in it, and would rather believe in it than experience it. Yes, the French, for all they are so gay, despise themselves for being so. They've lost faith in the value of their old gaiety. The sceptical, talkative nation believes in silence, the expansive, amiable nation allows itself to be imposed upon by the morgue of pedantry

and the pretentious nullity of the pontiffs of the white cravat. In politics as in science, in art as in literature, so in all. He jests about them all, hates them, shuns them like the plague, but they alone possess his secret admiration and his entire confidence! You ask what influence *ennui* can have. Why, my dear child, it means that society is composed of two classes: those who don't understand how to bore themselves and are nothing, and those who understand the art of being bored and are everything—after those who know how to bore others.

Jeanne. And this is the sort of place you bring me to, you wretch!

Paul. Do you want to be a prefect's wife, or not?

Jeanne. Oh! if you——

Paul. Never mind, it's only for a week.

Jeanne. A week! without talking or laughing, without kissing you!

Paul. Only before people. When we are alone, in corners; oh! it'll be delightful. I'll plan meetings—in the garden, everywhere—as we did in your father's house before our marriage.

Jeanne. Oh, it's all the same to me!

(She opens the piano and plays an air out of "Madame Angot.")

Paul (terrified). Whatever are you doing?

Jeanne. It's only a tune out of yesterday's comic opera.

Paul. Oh, misery! Is that how you profit by——

Jeanne. In a box, both together. Oh! Paul, it was so nice.

Paul. Jeanne, but Jeanne, if any one should come. Do stop. *(François appears.)* Too late! *(Jeanne changes operabouffe into a Beethoven Symphony.)* *(Aside.)* Beethoven! Bravo! *(He marks time with a serious expression.)* Ah! decidedly there's no music except at the Conservatoire.

Paul (introducing Jeanne to Madame de Cérans). Madame Paul Raymond.

Mme. de Céran. Welcome to my house, Madame. You will find friends here. (*Introducing them to Saint-Réault.*) Monsieur Paul Raymond, sous-prefect of Agenis. Madame Paul Raymond. The Baron Emile de Saint-Réault.

Paul. I'm all the more glad to make your acquaintance, Monsieur, since I had the honour of knowing your illustrious father. (*Aside.*) He puzzled me with his questions at the examination for my degree.

Mme. de Céran (to Jeanne). I'm afraid, at your age, Madame, you'll find my house very dull. Don't be angry with your husband if you find it monotonous, and console yourself by remembering that to sacrifice yourself is to obey, and that in coming here you were not free to do as you liked.

Jeanne (gravely). What do you mean, Madame? To be free is not to do what we like, but what we deem right, as the philosopher Joubert says.

Mme. de Céran (looking at Paul approvingly). That remark reassures me, my child. . . . Does not all that learning frighten you? An evening spent in that fashion is so much time lost for your beauty.

Jeanne (gravely). What ordinary persons call time lost is very often time found, as Monsieur de Tocqueville says.

Mme. de Céran (looking at Jeanne with astonishment, in an aside to Paul). She is charming. . . . (*To François.*) Where are the newspapers?

François. Monsieur de Saint-Réault took them this morning, Madame. They are in his room.

Paul (taking the "Journal Amusant" out of his pocket). If you like, Madame——

Jeanne (stopping him hastily, taking the "Journal des Débats" out of her pocket, and handing it to the Countess). It is to-day's.

Mme. de Céran. Many thanks.

Paul (aside to his wife). Bravo! excellent! Go on! Joubert and Tocqueville! exquisite! Oh! it's——

Jeanne (aside to Paul). It's not De Tocqueville, it's me.

Faul. Oh!

Pailleron (1834).

PLATONIC LOVE.

(FROM "LE MONDE OU L'ON S'ENNUIE.")

(*A large conservatory lighted by gas, which has been turned low.*)

Lucy (an English girl). Are you there, Monsieur Bellac?

Bellac (a professor). Yes, Mademoiselle.

Lucy. Are you on this side?

Bellac. Yes, here. I beg your pardon. The conservatory is generally better lighted. I can't think why, this evening—— (*Approaches her.*)

Lucy. But, Monsieur Bellac, what do you mean by demanding a meeting of this sort? And your letter of this morning? Why did you write to me?

Bellac. Because I wanted to speak to you, dear Miss Lucy. Is it the first time we've sought solitude in order to exchange our ideas? Surrounded as I am here, what other means was there of speaking to you alone?

Lucy. What other means? You had simply to offer me your arm, and walk out of the drawing-room. I'm not a French girl.

Bellac. But you're in France.

Lucy. In France, as elsewhere, I do as I like. I've no need of secrecy, still less of mystery. You disguise your handwriting, you put no signature. It was only by your pink paper—oh, how French you are!

Bellac. And you! you are the austere Muse of Science, haughty Polymnia! cold and proud Pieris! Won't you sit down?

Lucy. No, no. See how all your precautions have gone against us. I've lost the letter.

Bellac. What! you've lost——

Lucy. And what do you suppose the person who finds it will think? Certainly there was no envelope, no address.

Bellac. Nor my handwriting, nor my signature. You perceive how wisely I acted. I assure you, I did it for the best, dear Miss Lucy. Forgive your professor, your friend, and sit down.

Lucy. No. Tell me what has to be said in such great secrecy, and let us go back.

Bellac (detaining her). Wait. Why didn't you come to my lecture to-day?

Lucy. Because I spent all my time looking for the letter. Tell me what you've got to say to me.

Bellac. How anxious you are to leave me! (*Giving her a packet of papers tied with a pink ribbon.*) There!

Lucy. Proofs!

Bellac (with emotion). Of my book.

Lucy (also with emotion). Of your—— Ah, Professor!

Bellac. I wished you to be the only person to see it before it is given to the world.

Lucy (taking his hand with effusion). Ah, my friend! my friend!

Bellac. You will read it? The book into which I've put all my thought! And I'm sure you'll find we are in perfect sympathy except on one point, and that——

Lucy. Is?

Bellac (tenderly). Is it possible that you do not believe in Platonic love?

Lucy. I? Oh dear no.

Bellac (graciously). Well, but with us now?

Lucy (simply). Oh, with us it's friendship.

Bellac (affectedly). I beg your pardon, it's more than friendship, and better than love.

Lucy. Then if it's more than one and better than the other, it follows that it's neither one nor the other. And

now, thank you once more a thousand times. Let us go back. (*About to go.*)

Bellac (preventing her). Stay!

BELLAC (TENDERLY): "IS IT POSSIBLE THAT YOU DO NOT BELIEVE IN PLATONIC LOVE?"

LUCY: "I! OH DEAR NO."

Lucy. No, no; let us go back.

Bellac (keeping her). But stay, I entreat you. A word!

a word ! Enlighten me, or enlighten yourself. The question is worth the trouble. Come, Lucy !

Lucy (growing excited). Come, Professor ! Come, my friend, consider your Platonic love. Philosophically it doesn't hold.

Bellac. But, if you please, that love is friendship.

Lucy. If it's friendship, it's not love.

Bellac. But the concept is double.

Lucy. If it's double, it's not one.

Bellac. But there's confusion. (*He sits down.*)

Lucy. If there's confusion, there's no longer character ; and I go further—(*she sits down also*)—I deny that confusion is possible between love which has individuation for a basis, and friendship a form of sympathy—that is to say, of a deed where the *ego* becomes in some sort the *non-ego*. I deny it absolutely, absolutely !

Bellac. Come, Lucy !

Lucy. Come, Professor ! Yes or no ? The principal factor——

Bellac. Take an example, Lucy. Let us suppose any two beings, two abstractions, two entities, some man, some woman, both loving each other, but with the ordinary physiological love ; you understand me ?

Lucy. Perfectly.

Bellac. Imagine them situated as we are, alone, at night, together. What will happen ? Follow me closely ; this phenomenon will take place. Both, or more probably one of them first, the man will draw nearer the woman he imagines he loves. (*Draws nearer to Lucy.*)

Lucy (moving away a little). But——

Bellac (holding her gently). No, no ! You will see. They will look into each other's eyes. They will——

Lucy. But, Monsieur Bellac !

Bellac. And then, and then, there will pass into their *ego*, independently of their *ego* itself, an uninterrupted series

of unconscious acts, which, by a sort of series of slow but irresistible advances, will throw them, if I may venture to say so, into the fatality of an anticipated *dénouement*, in which the will goes for nothing, the intellect for nothing, the soul for nothing.

Lucy. But those advances——

Bellac. Wait, wait! Now, let us suppose another couple and another love. Instead of physiological love, psychological love. Instead of any ordinary couple, two exceptions. You follow me?

Lucy. Yes.

Bellac. They also, seated one beside the other, will draw nearer together.

Lucy (moving away). But it's exactly the same thing.

Bellac (still holding her). Stay, there's a difference. Let me make the difference clear to you. They also will look into each other's eyes and——

Lucy. Well, then? (*Getting up.*)

Bellac (making her sit down). Only, only—it's not their beauty they contemplate, it's their soul. It's not their voices they hear, but the palpitation of their thoughts. And then, when by an entirely different *processus*, although congeneric, they also reach the mysterious and agitating point when the being itself is unconscious, a sort of delicious inaction of the will that seems to be at once the *summum* and *terminus* of human felicity. They will not awake on earth, but in heaven itself, for their love soars beyond the stormy region of ordinary passion into the pure ether of sublime ideality. (*A silence.*) Lucy, dear Lucy, do you understand me? Oh! say that you understand me.

Lucy (greatly agitated). But it seems to me that the two concepts are identical.

Bellac (passionately). Identical! Oh, Lucy, how cruel you are! Identical!!! But remember how everything here is subjective. Subjective, Lucy. Understand me clearly.

(*Noise of kissing heard.*)

Bellac and Lucy (*getting up, alarmed*). Ah ! there's some one there.

Bellac. Come, come, take my hand.

Lucy. Oh, Professor, I'm sure some one was listening.

Bellac. Come.

Lucy. But I'm horribly compromised. (*Going out.*)

Bellac (*following her*). Dear Miss Lucy, I will make reparation, I will make reparation.

Pailleron.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

Antoinette (*speaking off*). Bob ! Bob ! down, sir ! Yes, till this evening ! Take care he doesn't bite you ! Bob, be quiet ! Ha ! ha ! Till this evening, Monsieur Gilet ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Mme. de Rénat. Antoinette, have you taken leave of your senses ?

Ant. I beg your pardon, godmother, but—ah ! Monsieur Raoul—it's—ha ! ha ! ha ! it's Monsieur Gilet, don't you know, and then Bob ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha ! I must laugh, it's so funny.

Mme. de Rénat. Why do you laugh like that ?

Ant. He's just proposed to me, godmother.

Mme. de Rénat. Who ?

Ant. The lawyer.

Mme. de Rénat. Monsieur Gilet ?

Ant. Yes, you've got it. Out in the open air—ha ! ha ! ha ! I was coming back after doing your message at Polette's, and I met him just by the big hedge—ha ! ha ! He got out of his carriage and began to walk beside me. He talked to me of his age, his practice, his fortune, and then he put on a tender tone of voice, and made his

eyes small, oh! so small—ha! ha! A serious man like him, he was funny, he was funny—ha! ha! And then suddenly he called me pretty child, and he took my hand, but that annoyed Bob, and I burst out laughing. And the

‘ HE TALKED TO ME OF HIS AGE, HIS PRACTICE, HIS FORTUNE.’

dog barked, and the lawyer cooed, and I laughed —ha! ha!
“Mademoiselle, I beseech you to believe in my devotion—
bow-wow-wow. My practice brings me in on an average
fifteen thousand francs a year. Oh, Antoinette! deign to

make my life beautiful—bow-wow-wow. I can give you the best references; oh! deign—bow-wow-wow-wow—may I venture to hope?" Bow-wow-wow-wow! Ha! ha! ha! The declaration to the dog—ha! ha! No, it was too funny.

Mme. de Rénat. You must not laugh like that; the lawyer is a very good match.

Raoul. Gilet's not a match, but an article of clothing.¹

Ant. Ha! ha! ha!

Mme. de Rénat. He's a young man.

Raoul. He's not a young man, he's a lawyer.

Mme. de Rénat. At least, he's a husband——

Ant. He's not even a husband, he's a widower! How horrid to marry a widower!

Mme. de Rénat. Antoinette!

Ant. I've said something wrong?

Mme. de Rénat. You're too old——

Ant. You call me Antoinette, something's the matter; don't you love me any more?

Mme. de Rénat. You know very well that I love you, and you take advantage of it.

Ant. Then let me take proper advantage. (*She tries to kiss her.*)

Mme. de Rénat (*pushing her away*). What a child you are! Leave me alone!

Ant. Oh! in that little corner, it's so soft, it's my very own little corner, you know. (*She kisses her.*)

Mme. de Rénat. There, there, mad girl——

Ant. No, but Madame Gilet, godmother, think of that; and then a lawyer. It's a very serious matter, don't you think so? Do you want me to let him venture to hope? Say? Are you anxious that I should do so? Ah! you laughed! Yes, yes, she laughed! Yes, yes! Didn't she, Monsieur Raoul?

Pailleron.

¹ *Gilet* is French for waistcoat.

CALIBAN.¹

[SCENE.—*A cellar opening on a courtyard. Caliban, drunk, is lying on the ground, writhing in a pool of wine that flows from a cask whose bung he had removed and forgotten to replace.*]

Caliban. A thousand curses! Oh! the brute, the liar, the do-nothing! Trust the word of princes, indeed! In the enchanted island, when I was idiot enough to take that drunkard Stephano for a god, and to worship such a buffoon, I had a narrow escape. We ought to have settled my master for good and all. Ah! it was beautifully contrived! But thanks to my companion, that vapid fiddler, Prospero learned all. I fully expected some of those torments that made me roar. But no! I promised to be good, and he was fool enough to believe me. The next day we left the island and came to this plain, which resembles our former abode about as much as a haunch of venison resembles a bone gnawed by ten dogs. I became useless; here there is no need to search for the fresh springs, to pluck berries from the trees, or to find out the nests of the young birds. I was promised my freedom, and I still await it. To that freedom I have a right! Once I took no thought for it; but since I've been living in this Lombard plain my ideas have largely developed. The rights of man are absolute. Why should Prospero prevent me belonging to myself? My man's pride rebels. True, I get drunk in his cellar, but to humiliate the people by their benefits is surely the first crime of princes. The only way to wipe out

¹ In this delightful *jeu d'esprit* M. Renan imagines that after the reconciliation at the end of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Prospero is again set up on the throne of Milan. With him go Ariel, Caliban, Gonzalo, and Trinculo. M. Renan shows these characters in certain combinations adapted to the ideas of the present day.

that disgrace is to kill them ; such an outrage can only be effaced by blood. After all, as regards me, Prospero was an usurper. He stole my island from me. I was its rightful sovereign. The island was mine ever since my mother, Sycorax, deserted me, leaving me to go to the devil. I appropriated it to my needs, and lived out of it until the miserable magician and his carrion of an airy servant took possession of it. I was the first settler. Prospero was a conqueror, an usurper. (*Divine music, full of sweetness, announcing Ariel's approach.*) There's his everlasting fiddling ! Hateful brute, thief, malicious wretch ! Ah ! if I could only get hold of you and tear you to pieces. (*Caliban is seized with violent convulsions.*) Peace, peace, I pray ! Spare me your hideous harmonies. It has the same effect on me as a rough sea. Irritate somebody else——

Ariel (*visible ; prolonged sweet trill*). Why so discontented ? Where could you be better off than you are here ? You have free access to the cellar ; you know the road to it. Free, you would not be so happy.

Calib. Yes, but another man gains by my labour. Fool of a lackey, don't you see how intolerable it is to be another man's slave ? Haven't you a scrap of honour ? One mortal has no right to keep another in an inferior position. In such a case revolt becomes a sacred duty.

Ar. You forget that it is through Prospero you exist, that you are a man.

Calib. All very fine, no doubt ! But the island was mine through my mother, Sycorax. It was I who showed Prospero the barren places and fertile, the springs, the best trees ; and in return he makes me a slave.

Ar. You are continually saying that the island was yours. It belonged to you as much as the desert belongs to the gazelle, the jungle to the tiger. You did not know the name of anything ; you knew nothing of reason. Your

inarticulate speech resembled the bellowing of a camel in a bad temper. The sounds stifled in your throat were like a fruitless effort to vomit. Prospero taught you the language of the Aryans. And then the reason inseparable from that divine language entered into you. By degrees, thanks to language and reason, your deformed features gained a certain grace; your webbed fingers became separated one from the other; you were transformed from a foetid fish into a man, and now you speak almost like a child of the Aryans.

Calib. Oh, hold your tongue! I could have dispensed with language. How comes it that Prospero didn't see that I should use the language he taught me for cursing? Prospero's a fool. Every man for himself! He taught me everything, you say? He was wrong. In his place I should not have done it. Who forced him to do it? I asked nothing of him.

Ar. It's positively dreadful to hear you talk like that. Is it not right that the more highly civilised man should seek to raise others?

Calib. If I was the government I should take good care to do nothing of the sort. How foolish it is to imagine for a moment that the man we raise will not desire to live for himself! All living things are ungrateful. Every effort to raise another turns against the instructor. Each man according to his strength. The crocodile hasn't got a big mouth for nothing. It's my nature to curse; I cannot refrain from uttering insults. To give me language was to arm me for that. All I've taken from the Aryan language is filth and blasphemy. It's stronger than I am, I can't help cursing.

Calib. (addressing a crowd of Milanese ripe for rebellion against Prospero's rule). This is no time for talking. The man who has done you this wrong is wicked, crafty, preposterous. He must be seized, and be prevented from

acting so again. Don't imagine that it will be easy. He keeps in his employ spirits as evil doing as himself, and especially a damned fiddler whose tricks are incredible. Once before I had planned a way of getting rid of him. I perspired with the joy of it, but—all was discovered. Don't be too confident; it's not as easy as you think. Trust the ordering and conduct of the matter to me. He is absent-minded; sometimes thinks of nothing at all. We must take him by surprise. I will take you to him by doors and passages I know well. The essential thing is to seize his books. Those books of the devil—ah, how I hate them! They were the instruments of my slavery. They must be seized and burned. Another might use them. Down with books! They are the people's worst enemies. Those who possess them have power over

their fellow-creatures.

knows Latin rules his

with Latin!¹ First t

him. In them lies the s

That is how he rules o

Break, too, his glass ;

all his implements. W

books, he will be like ;

he is like us, the jo

three-fourths done.

He is old and weak ;

his guard counts for

nothing, because the

money he ought to

give them, he spends

on books and retorts.

You could easily

strangle him, or put

him in a cage and

¹ In French, *Latin* is often an equivalent for learning generally.

let him starve, or force him to turn monk. Oh! his books once burned, you can afford to be generous. But till then, show no pity!

(*Unanimous applause.*)

Ernest Renan (1823-1892).

A JOURNEY DURING THE WAR (1870).

IN the carriage the travellers looked at each other curiously by the chill light of the dawn.

At the end, in the best places, dozed, opposite each other, Monsieur and Madame Loiseau, wholesale wine merchants, of the Rue Grand-Pont.

Formerly clerk to a master who had failed, Loiseau had bought a business and made his fortune. He sold bad wine very cheap to little country retailers, and passed among his friends and acquaintances for a sly dog, a true Norman, full of tricks and joviality.

Small of stature, he owned a big corporation, topped by a ruddy face between a greyish pair of whiskers.

His wife, tall, strong, determined, with a loud voice, and of quick decision, was the order and arithmetic of the house of business he made lively with his jovial activity.

Beside them, more dignified, belonging to a superior caste, sat Monsieur Carré-Lamadon, a man of some importance, a cotton-spinner of position, owner of three mills, officer of the *Légion d'honneur*, and a member of the *Conseil Général*. Madame Carré-Lamadon, much younger than her husband, was the consolation of officers of good family when their regiments were stationed at Rouen. She sat opposite her husband.

Her neighbours, the Count and Countess Hubert de Bréville, bore one of the noblest and oldest names in Normandy. The Count, an old gentleman of aristocratic

bearing, tried by artifices of the toilet to accentuate his natural resemblance to Henri IV., for, according to a legend much boasted of in the family, that sovereign had had one of the De Brévilles for mistress, and had created her husband a count, and governor of a province.

These six persons sat at the end of the carriage, and were the incarnation of well-to-do society, calm and strong, respectable authentic people who had a religion and principles.

By a strange chance all the women were on the same seat, and the Countess's neighbours were two Sisters, who were telling their beads and muttering *Paters* and *Aves*.

Opposite the two nuns were a man and a woman who attracted everybody's attention.

The man, well known, was Cornudet, the democrat, the terror of respectable people. For twenty years he had dipped his big red beard in the beer-mugs of every democratic *café*. With brothers and friends he had run through a considerable fortune inherited from his father, a confectioner, and he was impatiently waiting for the Republic to obtain the position merited by so many revolutionary consummations. Otherwise he was a very good fellow, inoffensive and obliging; he had busied himself in organising the defence with inimitable ardour. He had caused holes to be dug in the plains, had levelled the young trees in the neighbouring forest, sown the high-roads with traps, and at the approach of the enemy, satisfied with his preparations, had quickly made his way to the town. He considered that he would be of more use at Havre, where new entrenchments would be necessary.

The woman, known to be of bad reputation, was famous for her *embonpoint*, which had earned her the name of Boule de Suif. All the same she was pleasant to look at. Her face was like a ruddy apple, a peony-bud ready to flower; and in it there opened a pair of magnificent

black eyes, shaded by thick eyelashes that threw a shadow within; below, a pretty, little kissable mouth, furnished with tiny white teeth.

It was also said that she possessed many invaluable qualities.

As soon as she was recognised, the respectable women began to whisper about her, and loudly enough to make her look up. Then she gazed so boldly and provokingly at her neighbours that a perfect silence ensued, and everybody looked down, except Loiseau, who watched her with an air of great cheerfulness.

But soon conversation recommenced between the three ladies, who, in consequence of the presence of Boule de Suif, had suddenly become almost intimate friends.

The three men also, whom the presence of Cornudet brought nearer together by some sort of conservative instinct, talked about money with a certain air of contempt for the poor. Count Hubert related the damage the Prussians had done him, the loss resulting from stolen cattle and ruined harvests, with the assurance of a great nobleman ten times a millionaire, whom such ravages would scarcely affect for more than a year. M. Carré-Lamadon, with his large experience of the cotton trade, had been careful to send six hundred thousand francs to England—a provision for a rainy day that he looked after at every opportunity. As to Loiseau, he had so arranged matters that he had sold all the common sorts of wine that remained in his cellar to the French commissariat; thus the State owed him a formidable sum that he was expecting to receive at Havre.

And all three looked amiably at each other. Although of different rank, they felt that they were brothers by money, by the great freemasonry of those who possess, who make the gold ring when they put their hands in their trousers' pocket.

The carriage progressed so slowly that by ten o'clock in

the morning, they had only gone four leagues. Three times the men got out to ascend the hills on foot. They began to get uneasy, for they ought to have lunched at Tôtes, and they now despaired of reaching that place before night. They were all eagerly looking out for a tavern on the road, when the diligence fell foul of a snow-drift, and it took two hours to get it out.

Hunger grew greater, and caused them much discomfort ; and neither eating-house nor wine-shop was visible, for the approach of the Prussians and the march of the famished French troops had frightened away all industry.

The gentlemen sought provisions from the farms by the roadside, but they were unable to procure even bread ; the suspicious peasant hid his stores, for fear of being pillaged by the soldiers, who, having nothing to eat, took by force everything they could lay hands on.

About one in the afternoon Loiseau announced that he felt a great void in his stomach. Everybody had been suffering from the same complaint for a long while, and the violent desire of eating increasing every moment killed conversation.

From time to time some one yawned, almost immediately another followed suit ; and each in turn, according to his disposition, his breeding, and his social position, opened his mouth noisily or quietly, quickly putting his hand before the gaping hole whence issued a cloud of vapour.

Boule de Suif stooped down several times as if searching for something under her petticoats. She hesitated a second, looked at her neighbours, and then quietly sat up again. The faces were pale and contracted. Loiseau declared that he would give a thousand francs for a small ham. His wife made a gesture of dissent, and then calmed herself. It always pained her to hear of money being wasted, and she could never understand jokes on that subject. "The fact is," said the Count, "I don't feel well ; how could I have

forgotten to bring provisions?" They all reproached themselves in the same fashion.

However, Cornudet had a bottle of rum. He offered it round, and was coldly refused. Only Loiseau accepted a drop or two, and in returning the bottle thanked him. "It's very nice; it warms one, and helps one to forget one's hunger." The alcohol put him into a good temper, and he suggested doing as they did aboard-ship in the song: to eat the fattest of the travellers. The indirect allusion to Boule de Suif shocked the well-bred ladies and gentlemen. No one replied, only Cornudet smiled. The two nuns had ceased telling their beads, and wrapping their hands in their big sleeves, sat perfectly still, obstinately looking down, doubtless offering to heaven the suffering it sent them.

At last, at three o'clock, when they were driving through an endless plain, without a single village in sight, Boule de Suif, stooping quickly, drew out from under the seat a large basket covered with a white napkin.

First she took out a small china plate, a fine silver drinking-cup, then a large dish in which were two whole chickens, ready carved, covered with jelly; and you could see other good things wrapped up in the basket—pasties, fruit, dainties, provisions intended for a three-days' journey, so as not to be at the mercy of tavern cooking. Four necks of bottles might be seen among the parcels of provisions. She took a wing of chicken, and began to eat it delicately with one of the rolls called in Normandy *Régence*.

They all fixed their eyes on her. Then the odour spread, filling the nostrils, making the mouth water, and the jaws under the ears contract painfully. The contempt of the ladies for the woman became ferocious, they would have liked to kill her, or to throw her out of the carriage into the snow, her and her drinking-cup, her basket, and her provisions.

But Loiseau devoured the dish of chicken with his eyes.

He said : " Madame had more forethought than we. There are people who always think of everything." She looked up at him. " Would you like some, sir? It's hard to fast so many hours." He bowed. " Indeed, to speak frankly, I won't refuse. I can stand it no longer. In time of war as in time of war ; isn't it so, madame?" And looking around him, he added : " In moments like this, it is very nice to be in the company of amiable people." He spread out a newspaper he had, in order not to soil his trousers, and with the point of a knife that always found a home in his pocket, he raised a thigh covered with jelly, dismembered it with his teeth, and chewed it with so evident a satisfaction, that a loud sigh of distress filled the carriage.

But Boule de Suif, in a humble, low voice, invited the nuns to share her luncheon. They both instantly accepted, and without raising their eyes, after muttering their thanks, began to eat very fast. Cornudet likewise did not refuse his neighbour's invitation, and with the nuns made a sort of table by spreading newspapers over their knees.

The mouths opened and shut without stopping, swallowed, chewed, gulped ferociously. Loiseau in his corner worked hard, and in a whisper advised his wife to follow suit. She refused for some time, but after a painful contraction of her inside, she yielded. Then her husband, rounding his sentences, asked their " charming companion " if she would allow him to offer Madame Loiseau a small piece. " Certainly, sir," she replied with a pleasant smile, and held out the dish.

Embarrassment occurred when the first bottle of Bordeaux was uncorked ; there was only one drinking-cup. They passed it round after wiping it. Only Cornudet, doubtless from politeness, placed his lips on the spot still wet from his neighbour's lips. Then, surrounded by persons eating, suffocated by the odour of food, the Count and Countess de Bréville, as well as Monsieur and Madame Carré-

Lamadon endured the odious punishment known as that of Tantalus. Suddenly the manufacturer's young wife heaved a sigh which made them all turn their heads. She was as white as the snow outside, her eyes closed, her head fell forward. She had fainted. Her husband, terrified, implored help from everybody. They all lost their heads, when the elder of the two nuns, supporting the invalid's head, put Boule de Suif's glass to her lips, and made her swallow a few drops of wine. The pretty woman moved, opened her eyes, smiled, and declared in a weak voice that she felt much better. But to prevent any recurrence, the nun forced her to drink a whole glass of Bordeaux, adding, "It's only hunger, nothing else."

Then Boule de Suif, blushing and confused, muttered, looking at the four fasting travellers: "May I venture to offer these ladies and gentlemen something?" She was silent, fearing some insult. Loiseau took up the matter. "Why, of course, in such a situation, we're all brothers and must help each other. Come, ladies, no ceremony, accept. Why, it's even uncertain if we shall find a house where we can spend the night. At the rate at which we are now going, we shan't be at Tôtes before noon to-morrow." They hesitated, no one venturing to take upon himself the responsibility of the "Yes." But the Count decided the matter. He turned towards the bashful girl, and putting on his finest manners, said: "We accept with gratitude, madame."

It is only the first step that is difficult. The Rubicon once crossed, they set to work with a will. The basket was emptied. It still contained a *pâté de foie gras*, a lark pie, a piece of smoked tongue, winter pears, fancy cakes, and a cup full of pickled gherkins and onions: Boule de Suif, like all women, loved sour things.

They could not eat the girl's provisions and refuse to talk to her. So they chatted with reserve at first; then as she

behaved very well, with greater ease. Mesdames de Bréville and Carré-Lamadon, who were very well bred, made themselves most agreeable. The Countess especially showed the amiable condescension of a great lady, whom no contact can damage, and was delightful. But severe Madame Loiseau, who had the soul of a policeman, remained ill-tempered, speaking little and eating much.

The basket was empty. By ten they had finished its contents, regretting that it was not bigger. For a short time they continued talking, though with less animation, since there was nothing more to eat.

Guy de Maupassant (1850).

THE PIECE OF STRING.

ALL the roads leading to Goderville were crowded with peasants and their wives coming into the town ; for it was market day.

Maître Hauchecorne, of Bréauté, had just reached Goderville, and was taking his way towards the market-place when he noticed a little piece of string lying on the ground. Maître Hauchecorne, with the economy of a true Norman, thought it right to pick up anything that might be of use, and he bent down with difficulty, because he suffered from rheumatism. He took the little piece of fine cord off the ground, and was carefully rolling it up when he noticed that Maître Malandain, the harness-maker, was standing at his door watching him. They had formerly done business together about a halter, and had ever since hated each other cordially. Maître Hauchecorne felt a sort of shame to be caught by his enemy searching in the mud for a bit of string. He put it quickly in his blouse, then in his

breeches' pocket, and then pretended to be searching on the ground for something he couldn't find, and went off to the market, his head thrown forward, his body bent in two with pain.

All the aristocracy of the plough dined at Jourdain's, innkeeper and horse-dealer, a shrewd fellow who had money.

The dishes went round, and were emptied as well as the pewter jugs of yellow cider. Everybody talked about their business, their purchases, and their sales. They interchanged ideas about the crops. Weather was good for grass, but a little unfavourable for grain.

Suddenly a drum was heard in the courtyard in front of the house. Everybody, save a few who were indifferent, rose to their feet at once, rushed to the door, to the windows, mouths full and table-napkins in hand.

When he had finished beating his drum, the public crier, in a jerky voice, marking his sentences at the wrong time, said—

“Be it known to the inhabitants of Goderville, and in general to all—persons present at the market, that there was lost this morning on the Beuzeville road, between—nine and ten o'clock, a black leather pocket-book containing 500 francs and business papers. You are requested to take it—to the Mayor's office at once, or to the house of Maître Fortuné Houlbrèque of Manneville. A reward of twenty francs is offered.”

Then the man departed. In the distance the fainter voice of the crier and the muffled sound of the drum could once again be heard.

Then they began to talk of the event, weighing Maître Houlbrèque's chances of recovering or not recovering his pocket-book.

And the meal ended.

They were finishing their coffee when a policeman appeared on the threshold.

He asked : "Is Maître Hauchecorne de Bréauté here ?"

Maître Hauchecorne, seated at the other end of the table, replied, "Here I am."

And the policeman continued : "Maître Hauchecorne, will you be good enough to go with me to the mayoralty? The Mayor wishes to speak to you."

The peasant, surprised, uneasy, swallowed his glass of brandy at one draught, got up, and more bent than in the morning, for walking again after each rest was particularly difficult, he set out, repeating : "Here I am, here I am."

And he followed the policeman.

The Mayor was waiting for him, seated in an arm-chair. He was the lawyer of the place, a big, grave-looking man of pompous speech.

"Maître Hauchecorne," he said, "this morning you were seen to pick up on the Beuzeville road Maître Houlbrèque of Manneville's lost pocket-book."

The countryman, astounded, gazed at the Mayor, already terrified without knowing why, by the suspicion that attached to him.

"I—I—I picked up the pocket-book ?"

"Yes, you."

"On my word of honour, I know nothing about it."

"You were seen."

"I was seen ? Who saw me ?"

"Monsieur Malandain, the harness-maker."

Then the old man remembered, understood, and grew red with anger : "Ah ! he saw me, that fellow. He saw me pick up this piece of string ; look, your worship."

And fumbling in the depths of his pocket, he pulled out the bit of twine.

But the Mayor, incredulous, shook his head.

"You can never make me believe, Maître Hauchecorne, that Monsieur Malandain, who is a man of strict truth, took that cord for a pocket-book."

Then the peasant, furious, lifted up his hand, spit aside to attest his honour, repeating: "It is all the same God's truth, the holy truth, your worship. On my soul and my salvation, I repeat it."

The Mayor continued: "After picking up the thing, you searched for a long time in the mud, as if a piece of money had fallen out."

The peasant was bursting with indignation and fear.

"Is it possible, is it possible that any one can lie like that to misrepresent a poor man? Is it possible?"

It was useless to protest, no one believed him.

He was confronted with M. Malandain, who repeated and upheld his assertion. They called each other bad names for about an hour. At his own request, Maître Hauchecorne was searched. Nothing was found on him.

At length, the Mayor, greatly perplexed, dismissed him, warning him that he should inform the court and ask for orders.

The news spread. On coming out of the mayoralty, the old man was surrounded, questioned with a serious or scoffing curiosity, but without any indignation. And he began to relate the story of the piece of string. No one believed him. Every one laughed.

He went on, stopped by everybody, stopping his acquaintances, beginning his tale and his protestations over and over again, his pockets turned inside out to show that he had nothing.

People said to him: "Oh, you cunning old fellow, you!"

And he got angry, exasperated, fevered, wretched at not being believed, not knowing what to do, ever relating his story.

Night came. He had to depart. He went, accompanied by three neighbours, to whom he pointed out the place where he had picked up the bit of cord. And he talked of his adventure the whole way.

In the evening he went all over the village of Bréauté in order to tell every one. All were incredulous.

He was ill in consequence all night.

The next day, about one in the afternoon, Marius Paumelle, one of Maître Breton's farm-servants, took back the pocket-book and its contents to Maître Houlbrèque of Manneville.

The man maintained that he had found it on the road, and being unable to read, had taken it home and given it to his master.

The news spread to the surrounding country. Maître Hauchecorne was informed of it. He immediately made the round of the village, and began to tell his story, now made quite perfect by the *dénouement*. He triumphed.

"What grieves me," he said, "isn't so much the affair itself, you understand, as the lie. Nothing does you so much harm as to be falsely accused."

All day long he talked of his adventure. He related it on the high-roads to the passers-by, at the taverns to the persons who were drinking, and coming out of church on the following Sunday. He stopped strangers to tell them. Although he was reassured, yet something troubled him that he could not exactly explain. People seemed to mock at him as they listened. They did not seem convinced. He thought he heard jeers behind his back.

Tuesday in the next week, he went to the market at Goderville, urged merely by the desire of relating his case.

Malandain, standing at his door, began to laugh when he saw him pass. Why?

He attacked a farmer of Criquetot, who did not let him finish, and digging him in the ribs, exclaimed to his

face, "Oh, you cunning fellow! Go along with you!" Then he turned on his heels.

Maître Hauchecorne was astounded, and became more and more uneasy. Why did they call him a "cunning fellow"?

When he was seated at table in Jourdain's inn he began to explain the affair all over again.

A horse-dealer of Montivilliers cried—

"Get along with you, you old hand. I know your piece of string!"

Hauchecorne muttered, "But they found the pocket-book."

The other replied, "Oh, be quiet, father; there's one who finds, and another who makes restitution. Neither seen nor known, I promise you."

The peasant was completely taken aback. At last he understood. He was accused of sending the pocket-book back by a colleague, an accomplice.

He tried to protest. The whole table began to laugh.

He could not finish his dinner, and went away amid their jeers.

He returned home, ashamed and indignant, bursting with anger and confusion, so much cast down that with his Norman artfulness he was capable of doing what he was accused of, and even of boasting of it as a good trick. His innocence seemed to him, in his confusion, impossible to prove, his malice being known. And he was keenly hurt by the injustice of the suspicion.

Then he began relating his adventure again, lengthening his tale each day, sometimes adding new reasons, more vigorous protestations, more solemn oaths, that he imagined and prepared in his hours of solitude, his mind filled with the story of the piece of string. As his defence grew more complicated, and his arguments more subtle, he was the less believed.

"Those are the arguments of a liar," people said behind his back.

He felt it, chafed under it, and exhausted himself in useless efforts.

He visibly wasted away.

The wags now made him tell "the piece of string" as an amusement, just as you make an old soldier who has seen service relate his battles. His mind, mortally wounded, began to give way.

Towards the end of December he took to his bed.

He died early in January, and in the delirium of the last agony he attested his innocence, repeating, "A little bit of string—a little bit of string—here it is, your worship."

Guy de Maupassant.

THE GOOD STAR.

THAT evening,—oh, how far off is that time, how far off it is!—that evening a star fell into the gutter. It said to me, "You probably think I have come down from the wondrous azure to your gloomy earth without a purpose? What an error would be yours! I knew that you would pass along the street just at the very moment of my fall, and if you like, fluttering my rays like wings, I will transport you to the divine dwellings of peace and light. Up there, up there, higher still, human realities do not exist: what you call the truth has never saddened the eyes of the bright stars; but dreams are the ordinary travellers on the road of light." "I do not hesitate," I reply. "Open your wings of flame, transport me away, bird made of light!" Then the star bore me to the land of fantasy and dreams, whence I have never returned.

Catulle Mendès (1840).

CHARITY REWARDED.

ON the Spanish high-road, where the pretty lasses and the handsome lads arm-in-arm were returning from the *Corrida*, a young beggar, wrapped in his ragged cloak, asked alms, saying he had eaten nothing for two days. Judging from his miserable appearance, and his hollow cheeks, it was plain he did not lie. However, no one took any heed of him, occupied as they were with singing and with love. Must he be left to die of hunger, the handsome beggar, by the roadside?

But three girls, of twenty years, plump, laughing, stopped and took pity on him.

The first gave him a *real*.

"Thank you," he said.

The second gave him a smaller coin.

"May God reward you," he said.

The third—the poorest and the prettiest—had neither small coins nor *reals*; she gave him a kiss. The starving man spoke never a word, but a flower-seller happening to come by, he spent all the money they had just given him on a big bunch of roses, and presented it to the pretty girl.

Catulle Mendès.

A DELIGHTFUL DAY.

PHILIP had everything that goes to make a happy vagabond—except the proverbial five sous. He did without them, and one bright morning left Paris.

Directly he reached the country, he stopped for a moment, held up a moistened finger to see which way the wind blew, and walked on in that direction. For the breeze is the best counsellor of wandering Bohemians, and the way should be asked of it; unless you would rather refer to the first passing swallow. The sky was so free from clouds,

and of so diaphanous a blue, that Philip expected to see vague flights of angels appear in the distance; and by drawing into his lungs great draughts of the luminous fresh air, it seemed to him that all heaven, with its immensity and its angels, was within his own heart. As he passed along by a wood, he saw amongst the topmost branches of a tree a young man, pale and thin, with long hair, who, with head bent down, seemed to be whispering in the leaves to some one hidden or invisible. "What are you doing, sir?" asked Philip. "Sir," replied he of the tree, "Pliny, the naturalist, in order to confirm the fact that nightingales are apt to imitate the human voice, and are, besides, endowed with a very remarkable memory, relates how in an inn in the neighbourhood of Rome, several of those birds were in the habit of repeating to each other in their cages of an evening the political discussions held during the day by the various customers. Now I have discovered in this oak a nest of nightingales, and I am repeating in a low voice rondels and ballads to the featherless little ones, in order that later in summer they may sing them to the echo of the nights." "You write verses, sir?" "What, and don't you do the same? I've just finished a little ode to Spring, and I'll willingly repeat it to you." And without coming down from the tree the poet languidly declaimed his frivolous and melancholy strophes.

When noon rung out from a slender steeple, Philip had been hungry for three hours. If he had not gone into an inn, it was not indeed for want of inns,—the last one, still quite close, wafted to him through the window a delicious odour of cabbage, and of lard bubbling in the frying-pan,—but it was because he had not anything to pay the modest reckoning. His pocket was as empty as his stomach. And hunger, ever increasing, became imperious. A slender white goat was browsing in a ditch, and astonishing the dragon-flies with her gambols. A ferocious idea crossed

Philip's mind : to get possession of the goat, carry her into the dark wood, cut her throat, grill her flesh, skin and all, on a pyre of flaming branches, or devour her raw like the Fiji islanders. But with three bounds the pretty creature drew near him, and sat on her hind legs ; then, raising her horns, which were gilded, she began moving her fore-paws at a great rate, like a rabbit playing the drum. Philip was charmed, and kissed the little white goat without biting her. She was too pretty to eat, and he signed to her to come with him. She was quite willing, and they walked on together, she gambolling, he rather slowly, and very sulky ; she browsing the herbage here and there, he furiously envying her ! For his hunger, which he had hitherto restrained, would no longer listen to reason, and laughed indeed at the beautiful plains and the luminous horizon—you can't eat the horizon !—and he could have swallowed flowers, thorns and all, the wild roses that grew in the hedges, and scarcely knew what kept him from chewing the bark of the old elms ! But suddenly there are joyful shouts and gestures. " There she is ! look ! It's really she ! A gentleman is bringing her back. Ah ! you little beggar ! But there she is ! Thank you, sir ! " And the mountebanks, whose interrupted breakfast was to be seen on the tablecloth of green grass by the side of their house on wheels, consisting of meat and raw tomatoes, and bottles half full of dark-coloured wine, insisted that the traveller should share their repast. Then Philip ate with the formidable gluttony of a boa-constrictor swallowing a buffalo ; then, between a pink and black clown smothered in flour, and the leading lady adorned with a Merry-Andrew's hat, he drained his glass twelve times running, to the health of the hospitable Thespis.

Catulle Mendès.

THE MIRROR.

I

IT was in a kingdom in which there was no mirror. All the mirrors, those you hang on the walls, those you hold in your hand, those you carry on the *châtelaine*, had been broken, reduced to the tiniest bits by order of the queen. If the smallest glass was found, no matter in what house, she never failed to put the inhabitants to death with terrible tortures. I can tell you the motives of the strange caprice. Ugly to a degree that the worst monsters would have seemed charming beside her, the queen did not wish when she went about the town to run the risk of encountering her reflection; and knowing herself to be hideous, it was a consolation to her to think that others could not at least see their beauty. What was the good of having the most beautiful eyes in the world, a mouth as fresh as roses, and of putting flowers in your hair, if you could not see your head-dress, nor your mouth, nor your eyes? You could not even count on your reflection in the brooks and lakes. The rivers and ponds of the country had been hidden under deftly-joined slabs of stone; water was drawn from wells so deep that you could not see their surface, and not in pails in which reflection would have been possible, but in almost flat troughs. Grief was beyond anything you can imagine, especially among the coquettes, who were not rarer in that country than in others.

II.

However, there was in a suburb of the town a young girl called Jacinthe, who was not quite so miserable as the rest, because of a lover she had. Some one who finds you

beautiful, and never tires of telling you so, can take the place of a mirror. . . .

When he asked her if she would take him for a husband she certainly blushed, but not from fear; people who, seeing her smile, might have thought she was amusing herself with the thought of saying no, would have been much mistaken. The misfortune was that the news of the engagement came to the ears of the wicked queen, whose only joy was to trouble that of others, and she hated Jacinthe more than all, because she was the most beautiful of all.

III.

Walking one day, a short time before the wedding, in the orchard, an old woman approached her asking alms, then suddenly fell back with a shriek, like some one who had nearly trodden on a toad.

“Ah, heaven! what have I seen?”

“What’s the matter, my good woman, and what have you seen? Speak.”

“The ugliest thing on the face of the earth.”

“Certainly that isn’t me,” said Jacinthe, smiling.

“Alas! yes, poor child, it is you. I have been a long time in the world, but I never yet met any one so hideous as you are.”

“Do you mean to say that I am ugly—I?”

“A hundred times more than it is possible to express.”

.

Thereupon the old woman, who must have been some wicked fairy, a friend of the wicked queen, fled, cruelly laughing, while Jacinthe, all in tears, sank down on a bench under the apple-trees.

IV.

Nothing could divert her from her trouble. "I am ugly! I am ugly!" she repeated unceasingly. In vain her lover assured her of the contrary with many oaths, . . . and when he urged her, in spite of everything, to fix the wedding-day, she exclaimed: "I, your wife! Never! I love you too dearly to make you a gift of so frightful a thing as I am." . . . What was to be done? The only way to give the old woman the lie, and to convince Jacinthe of the truth, would have been to put a mirror before her eyes. But there was not a mirror in the whole kingdom; and the terror inspired by the queen was so great that no artisan would have consented to make one. "Well, I shall go to the court," said the lover at last. "However barbarous our mistress is, she cannot fail to be moved by my tears and Jacinthe's beauty." . . .

V.

"Well, what is it?" said the wicked queen. "Who are these people, and what do they want of me?"

"Your majesty, you see before you the most wretched lover on the face of the earth."

"That's a fine reason for disturbing me."

"Do not be pitiless."

"But what have I to do with your love troubles?"

"If you would allow a mirror——"

The queen rose, shaking with anger.

"You dare to talk of a mirror," she said, gnashing her teeth.

"Do not be angry, majesty. I beseech you, pardon me, and deign to hear me. The young girl you see before you labours under the most unaccountable error: she imagines that she is ugly——"

"Well!" said the queen with a fierce laugh, "she is right! I never saw, I think, a more frightful object."

At those words Jacinthe thought she should die of grief. Doubt was no longer possible, since to the queen's eyes, as well as to those of the beggar, she was ugly. Slowly she lowered her eyelids, and fell fainting on the steps of the throne, looking like a dead woman. But when her lover heard the cruel words, he was by no means resigned; he shouted loudly that either the queen was mad, or that she had some reason for so gross a lie. He had not time to say a word more; the guards seized him, and held him fast. At a sign from the queen some one advanced, who was the executioner. He was always near the throne, because he might be wanted at any moment.

"Do your duty," said the queen, pointing to the man who had insulted her.

The executioner calmly lifted a big sword, while Jacinthe, not knowing where she was, beating the air with her hands, languidly opened one eye, and then two very different cries were heard. One was a shout of joy, for in the bright naked steel Jacinthe saw herself, so deliciously pretty! and the other was a cry of pain, a rattle, because the ugly and wicked queen gave up the ghost in shame and anger at having also seen herself in the unthought-of mirror.

Catulle Mendès.

THE MAN OF LETTERS.

LAST evening a poet, as yet unknown, was correcting the last sheets of his first book. A famous man of letters, who happened to be there, quickly caught hold of the young man's hand, and said in a rough voice, "Don't send the press proofs! Don't publish those poems!"

"You consider them bad?"

"I haven't read them, and I don't want to read them.

They are possibly excellent. But beware of publishing them."

"Why?"

"Because, the book once out, you would henceforth be irremediably an author, an artist—that is to say, a monster!"

"A monster?"

"Yes."

"Are you a monster, dear master?"

"Certainly! and one of the worst kind, for I have been writing poems, novels, and plays longer than many others."

The young man opened his eyes wide. The other, walking up and down the room, violently gesticulating, continued—

"True, we are honest, upright, and loyal! Twenty or thirty years ago it was the fashion for literary men to borrow a hundred sous, and to forget to return them; to leave their lodgings without giving the landlord notice; and never to pay, even in a dream, their bootmaker or their tailor. To owe was a sort of duty.¹ Follies of one's youth! The Bohemians have disappeared; literature has become respectable. We have cut our hair and put our affairs in order. We no longer wear red waistcoats, and our *concierge* bows to us because we give him tips, just as politely as he does to the banker on the ground floor or the lawyer on the second. Good citizens, good husbands, good fathers, we prepare ourselves epitaphs full of honour. I fought in the last war side by side with Henri Regnault: I have a wife to whom I have never given the slightest cause for sorrow, and I myself teach my three children geography and history, and bring them up to have a horror of literature. Better still: it happened to me—a remarkable turning of the tables—to lend six thousand francs to one of my uncles, an ironmonger at Angoulême, who

¹ In French *to owe* and *duty* are the same word—*devoir*.

had foolishly got into difficulties, and not without reading him a severe lecture. In a word, we are orderly, correct persons. But I say we are monsters.

“For isn’t it indeed a monstrous thing, being a man, not to be, not to be able to be, a man like other men? to be unable to love or to hate, to rejoice or to suffer, as others love or hate, rejoice or suffer? And we cannot, no, no, never, not under any circumstances! Obligated to consider or observe, obliged to study, analyse, in ourselves and outside ourselves, all feelings, all passions, to be ever on the watch for the result, to follow its development and fall, to consign to our memory the attitudes they bring forth, the language they inspire, we have definitely killed in ourselves the faculty of real emotion, the power of being happy or unhappy with simplicity. We have lost all the holy unctuousness of the soul! It has become impossible for us, when we experience, to confine ourselves to experiencing. We verify, we appraise our hopes, our agonies, our anguish of heart, our joys; we take note of the jealous torments that devour us when she whom we expect does not come to the tryst; our abominable critical sense judges kisses and caresses, compares them, approves of them or not, makes reservations; we discover faults of taste in our transports of joy or grief; we mingle grammar with love, and at the supreme moment of passion, when we say to our terrified mistress, ‘Oh! I want you to love me till death!’ are victims of the relative pronoun, of the particle. Literature! literature! you have become our heart, our senses, our flesh, our voice. It is not a life that we live—it is a poem, or a novel, or a play. Ah! I would give up all the fame that thirty years of work have brought me, in order to weep for one single moment without perceiving that I am weeping!”

Catulle Mendès.

A LION HUNT.

NIGHT was coming on, and it was no longer possible to distinguish the various objects. Tartarin of Tarascon walked on for another half-hour, and then stopped. It was now quite dark; there was no moon, although the stars shone brightly in the sky. Not a soul was to be seen on the road. But our hero remembered that lions were not stage-coaches, and were unlikely of their own accord to take the high-road. He struck across country, and encountered ditches, brambles, and bushes at every step. No matter, on he went, when suddenly he halted. "There's a smell of lions about here," said our friend to himself, and sniffed violently right and left.

A gun in front of him, another in his hands, Tartarin of Tarascon went down on one knee and waited for one hour, two hours. Nothing happened. Then he remembered that according to his books the great lion-slayers when they went out hunting invariably had a kid led a few steps in front of them, and made it cry out by tugging at its foot with a string. As he had no kid, Tartarin tried to imitate one, and began to bleat in a tremulous voice, "Baa! baa!"

At first very softly, because at the bottom of his heart he was rather afraid lest the lion should hear; but as nothing came of it he bleated louder, "Baa! baa!" Still nothing appeared, and losing patience, he began again louder still, several times following, "Baa! baa! baa!" and with such force that the kid would certainly have been mistaken for a bull.

Suddenly something black and gigantic loomed a few steps in front of him. He was silent. The thing stooped, sniffed the ground, leaped, rolled over, darted off at a gallop, returned, and stopped short. Without a shadow of a doubt

it was the lion. You could plainly see his four short legs, his terrible mane, and his two eyes, two big eyes glittering in the darkness. Now to work! Fire! Bang! bang! It was over. Then a leap back, his hunting-knife in his hand.

A terrific howling was the result of Tartarin's shot. "He's got it," cried our good Tartarin, and steadying himself on his sturdy legs, he prepared to receive the beast's charge. But it had had more than enough, and fled, howling, at the top of its speed. Tartarin, however, did not stir. He expected the female, for, according to his books, she always came.

But on this occasion the female did not come, and after waiting two or three hours Tartarin grew tired.

"Suppose I take a nap till daylight," he said to himself, and, to prevent any chance of rheumatism, he had recourse to his patent tent. But the devil was in it! The construction of the tent was so remarkably ingenious that he could not open it.

In vain he toiled with it, perspiring; the confounded tent would not open. There are umbrellas that play like tricks on you when it is raining cats and dogs. Giving up the struggle, Tartarin threw the machine upon the ground, and lay down on top of it, swearing like the regular Provençal he was.

"Ta, ta, ra, ta, tarata!"

"What's that?" said Tartarin, waking up with a start. It was the bugles of the African chasseurs sounding the *réveille* in the Mustapha Barracks. The astounded lion-slayer rubbed his eyes. And do you know where he, who had thought himself in the wide desert, was? In a field of artichokes, between a patch of cauliflowers and a patch of beetroots.

In his Sahara vegetables grew. Near him, on the pretty green slope of Upper Mustapha, the white Algerian villas shone in the red glow of the rising sun.

The common, kitchen-garden-like physiognomy of the sleeping landscape vastly astonished the poor man, and made him very cross.

"These people are fools to plant their artichokes so near the lions, for certainly I've not been dreaming. Lions do come here, for there's the proof."

The proof consisted of spots of blood that the beast in its flight had left behind. Bending over the bloody trail, his eye on the watch, revolver in hand, valiant Tartarin, marching from artichoke to artichoke, reached a small field of oats. Down-trodden grass, a pool of blood, and in the middle of the pool, lying on its side, with a big

"BENDING OVER THE BLOODY TRAIL, HIS
EYE ON THE WATCH, REVOLVER IN HAND."

wound in its head, a—guess what!

"A lion, of course!"

No! An ass, one of those little donkeys so common in Algiers, and known there by the name of *bourriquets*.

Alphonse Daudet (1840).

THE MAYOR IN THE WOODS.

THE Mayor is on circuit. Coachman in front, footman behind, he is driving in great pomp in the State coach to the District Council of Combe-aux-Fées. On this important occasion the Mayor has donned his fine embroidered coat, his little opera-hat, his close-fitting silver-striped breeches, and his pearl-hilted gala sword. On his knees is a big embossed leather case; he looks at it ruefully.

The Mayor looks ruefully at the embossed leather case. He thinks of the fine speech he must make presently to the inhabitants of Combe-aux-Fées. "Beloved fellow-citizens." But in vain he twirls his fair silky whiskers, and repeats twenty times, "Beloved fellow-citizens." The rest of the speech does not come.

The rest of the speech does not come, and it is so hot in the coach. Suddenly the Mayor starts. At the foot of a hill he notices a wood of young oaks that seems to beckon to him.

The wood of young oaks seems to beckon to him: "Come and compose your speech here, Mr. Mayor; you'll be far more comfortable under my trees." The Mayor accepts the invitation, jumps out of the coach, tells his servants to wait for him, as he is going to compose his speech in the wood of young oaks.

In the little wood of young oaks are birds and violets, and springs under the cool grass. At the sight of the Mayor with his smart breeches and embossed leather case the birds are alarmed, and stop singing. The springs fear to make a sound, and the violets hide themselves in the grass. The little community had never seen a mayor, and ask in whispers who the fine gentleman that goes about in silver-striped breeches can be?

In whispers, beneath the greenwood tree, they ask who the fine gentleman that goes about in silver-striped breeches can be? Meanwhile the Mayor, enchanted with the silence and coolness of the wood, lifts up the skirts of his coat, puts his opera-hat on the grass, and seats himself on the moss at the foot of a young oak. Then he opens his big embossed leather case, and takes out a large sheet of official paper. "He's an artist," said the linnet. "No," said the bullfinch; "he's not an artist, for he wears silver-striped breeches. He must be a prince."

"He must be a prince," said the bullfinch. "Neither an artist nor a prince," interrupted an old nightingale that had sung the whole of one season in the mayoralty gardens. "I know who he is,—he's a mayor!" And all the wood murmurs, "He's a mayor! he's a mayor!" "How bald he is!" observes a crested lark. The violets ask, "Is he wicked?"

"Is he wicked?" ask the violets. The nightingale replies, "Oh, no!" And thus assured the birds resume their singing, and the violets their fragrance, just as if they were still alone. Undisturbed by the delightful commotion, the Mayor inwardly invokes the muse of agricultural meetings, and, holding up his pencil, begins declaiming in the voice reserved for State occasions. "Beloved fellow-citizens——"

"Beloved fellow-citizens," said the Mayor in his most ceremonious voice. A burst of laughter interrupts him. He turns round, but can see nothing except a big green woodpecker, who, perched on his opera-hat, is looking at him laughing. The Mayor shrugs his shoulders and tries to go on with his speech. But the woodpecker interrupts again and calls out, "What's the good?" "What's that you say? What's the good?" said the Mayor, flushing crimson; and, driving off the saucy creature, he begins again in finer style than ever, "Beloved fellow-citizens!"

"Beloved fellow-citizens," repeats the Mayor. But just at that moment the violets raise themselves on the tips of their stalks and whisper, "Mr. Mayor, smell how nice we smell." And beneath the moss the springs make divine melody for him, and over his head the birds sing him their sweetest songs, and the whole wood conspires to prevent him composing his speech.

The whole wood conspires to prevent him composing his speech. The Mayor, intoxicated with the perfume and the music, tries in vain to resist the charm that is taking hold of him. He leans on his elbow, unbuttons his gay coat, mutters once or twice again, "Beloved fellow-citizens, beloved fellow-cit——, beloved fel——" Then he sends his fellow-citizens to the devil, and there was nothing left for the muse of agricultural meetings but to hide her face.

Hide your face, oh! ye muse of agricultural meetings! When the mayoralty servants, anxious about their master, entered the little wood an hour later, they saw a sight that made them start back in horror. The Mayor was lying on his stomach in the grass, careless of appearances as a Bohemian. He had taken off his coat, and munching violets, was composing poetry.

Alphonse Daudet.

THE BENEFICENT GOD OF CHEMILLÉ.

THE priest of Chemillé had to carry the Holy Sacrament to a sick man.

It was very sad that any one should die on such a lovely summer's day, and just at noon too, when everything was life and light.

It was also very sad that the poor priest should be obliged to start directly after dinner, at the very time he was in the habit, breviary in hand, of taking a bit of a nap under the shade of his arbour, in the fresh air and repose of a pretty garden full of ripe peaches and hollyhocks.

"For Thy sake, O Lord!" thought the holy man, with a sigh; and, mounted on a grey ass, with the holy crucifix in front of him across the saddle, he followed the narrow pathway made half-way up the hillside between red rock, covered with flowering mosses, and the stony slope and tall brushwood stretching down to the plain.

The ass, likewise, the poor ass sighed, "For Thy sake, O Lord!" after his fashion, lifting up now one ear, now the other, to keep off the flies that were tormenting him.

How wicked and worrying those noontide flies are! and added to that there was the hill to go up and the priest of Chemillé to carry—no light weight, especially after a meal.

Occasionally peasants passed by, and the priest returned their greeting on the part of the holy cross without exactly knowing what he was doing, for his head began to be heavy with sleep.

Past Villandry, where the rock becomes higher and the steep path narrower, the priest of Chemillé was rudely awakened from his slumbers by the "Hoi! hoi!" of a waggoner coming towards him. The cart was heavily laden

with hay, and leaned to the side at every turn of the wheel.

It was a critical moment. Even by crouching as close as possible to the rock, there was not room for two abreast in the path. Go down again to the high road? The priest could not do it. He had taken this short cut for the sake of speed, knowing his sick man to be at the last extremity. He tried to explain this to the waggoner, but the rustic refused to listen.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said, without removing his pipe from his mouth, "but it's too hot for me to return to Azay by the side-path. But for you, jogging along quietly on your ass, it's all right."

"But, wretched man, don't you see what I've got here,

the holy crucifix, the Beneficent Chemillé, you bad man, that I'm taking with me."

"Go to Villandry," retorted the waggoner, "and have done with the God of Hoi! hoi!" and he spurred up his horse at a gallop, sending the ass and its load rolling down to the foot of the hill.

Our priest was not impatient. "Ah! it's it, is it? Very well, wait a moment," and dismounting, he carefully placed the holy crucifix on a bed of wild thyme.

Then the holy man fell on his knees, and offered up this short prayer : " Beneficent God of Chemillé, thou seest what has happened, and how I am forced to bring this recreant to his senses. And I can do it without assistance from any one, for I have strong fists and right on my side. Stay quietly there, look on at the fight, and be neither for nor against. I shall soon settle his business."

The prayer ended, he got up, and began turning up his sleeves. Then above his hands, his beautiful priestly hands, soft and smooth with many benedictions, there appeared two baker's wrists firm and strong as knots of ash.

Crash ! crash ! At the first blow the waggoner's pipe was broken between his teeth, at the second he found himself lying at the bottom of the ditch, humiliated, bruised, motionless.

Then the priest dragged the waggon back, and very carefully placed it along the slope with the horse's head in the shade of a mulberry-tree. He proceeded at a brisk trot to his sick man, whom he found sitting up under his chintz bed-curtains, recovered from his fever as if by a miracle, and in the act of uncorking an old bottle of sparkling Vouvray in order to celebrate his return to life. I leave you to guess whether our priest assisted in the operation.

From that time the Beneficent God of Chemillé has been very popular in Touraine, and it is he that the good people of that place invoke in all their quarrels, saying : " Oh ! Beneficent God of Chemillé, be neither for nor against ! "

Alphonse Daudet.

OF THE STREETS.

(SOHO.)

O H, dance a jig !

'Tis true I loved her for her eyes :
What purer stars in Heaven's skies?
What devil's malice lies in eyes !

Oh, dance a jig !

To rack a lover's heart with care;
To drive your soul to sheer despair;
To do it with a fetching air!—

Oh, dance a jig !

And now she's kissed and gone. For me,
Her flower-mouth still seems to be
The sweetest thing of memory.

Oh, dance a jig !

Save that, perhaps, I call to mind
Dear words with her, dear hours, to find
Her dearest then, most dear, most kind.

Oh, dance a jig !

After Verlaine.

APHORISMS.

Most of the mischief in the world would never happen if men would only be content to sit still in their parlours.

If everybody knew what one says of the other, there would not be four friends left in the world.

Would you have men think well of you, then do not speak well of yourself.

Pascal (1623-1662).

Great thoughts come from the heart.

One of the noblest qualities in our nature is that we are able so easily to dispense with greater perfection.

To do great things a man must live as though he had never to die.

Patience is the art of hoping.

Vauvenarges (1715-1747).

Unfortunately there are virtues that can only be practised by the rich.

Fashionable people employ their leisure better than their time. The poor have no leisure.

Familiarity brings about the closest friendships or the most violent hatreds.

There is nothing so absent as presence of mind.

Printing is the artillery of thought.

Antoine Rivarol (1793-1801).

Fiction has no business to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality.

Debts take from life.

The man of imagination without learning has wings and no feet.

Joubert (1754-1824).

Follies committed by the sensible, extravagances uttered by the clever, crimes committed by the good—that is what makes revolutions.

There are many persons who do not know how to waste their time alone. They are the pest of the busy.

Both men and women want to conceal their age, and for the same reason. Men wish to appear older than they are in order to rule sooner, and women wish to appear younger than they are in order to rule longer.

To demand nothing and to complain of no one is an excellent recipe for happiness.

A man of genius only needs a wife of sense ; more than one genius in a house is too much.

De Bonald (1753–1840).

Look twice to see accurately. Only look once to see beautifully.

To do easily what is difficult to others is talent ; to do what is impossible to others is genius.

He who too much fears to be duped can no longer be magnanimous.

Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821–1881).

PROVERBS.

HELP yourself, and heaven will help you.

The absent are always in the wrong.

To wait until larks fall into your mouth ready roasted.

A wise enemy is better than a foolish friend.

Everybody's friend is nobody's friend.

In time of war, as in time of war.

After me, the deluge.

To burn one's ships.

That's not worth a dog's shoes.

It is hunger marrying thirst.
To attempt to shave an egg.
He's like a body without a soul.
He's as cunning as Gribouille, who hides in the water to escape the rain.
There are faggots and faggots.
To throw dust in a man's eyes.
To speak French like a Spanish cow.
Who survives will see.
To fight with windmills.
You can't make arrows of every wood.
Those who come from a distance may well lie.
Among the blind one-eyed men are kings.
Other times, other manners.
Punishment limps, but it arrives at last. What is delayed is not lost.
We find no difficulty in believing what we fear and desire.
A living dog is better than a dead lion.
You can't get fine flour out of a sack of coals.
Criticism is easy, art is difficult.
The tongue is the falsest witness of the heart.
Money is the sinews of war.
The humpback does not see his own hump, but he sees that of his fellow.
Great grief is silent.
Talkers are no good doers.
Who sleeps, dines.
Who knows nothing, doubts nothing.
Who has land, has war.
If youth had knowledge, and old age strength . . .
For great evils, great remedies.
Cheapness brings ruin.
Each man to his vocation, and the cows will be well looked after.
If you wish to live long, you must become old betimes.

A door must be open or shut.
 You must not be too sure of anything.
 Don't throw the helve after the hatchet.
 Don't put your finger between the tree and the bark.
 Words depart, writings remain.
 You'll catch more flies with milk than vinegar.
 All truths should not be told.
 Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.
 Everything comes to him who knows how to wait.
 One nail drives out another.
 Old friends and old wine are best.
 Eat at pleasure, drink by measure.
 Women laugh when they can, and weep when they will.
 We shall see, as the blind man said.
 "They say" (*on dit*) is a fool.
 He that hath a wife is sure of strife.
 Without bread and wine even love will pine.
 Weather, wind, women, and fortune change like the
 moon.
 When you can't have what you like, you must like what
 you have.
 'Tis true greatness not to do what you have a mind to,
 but to have a mind to do what you ought.
 To love and to be wise are two different things.
 The friendship of great men is like the shadow of a bush,
 soon gone.
 Love does much, money everything.
 A good poet is generally a bad man.
 The doctor is often more to be feared than the disease.
 A deaf husband and a blind wife are always a happy
 couple.

NEWSPAPER HUMOUR.

“So the poor old man is dead?” “Yes, he died suddenly, and was thus spared the terror of seeing himself die.”

Calino joins in the conversation, “Was he blind, then?”

ONE day the Count of S. met M. de V., and said: “Is it true, Monsieur, that at a house where people were good enough to say that I had wit, you declared I hadn’t any.”

“Monsieur, I assure you there’s not a word of truth in it. I have never been at a house where people said you had wit.”

ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF HIM.—Madame de X. recently purchased a large estate in a department bordering on the Pyrenees. Wishing to make herself popular, she asked the mayors of the neighbouring parishes to furnish her with a list of the most deserving poor persons, in order that she might minister to their wants.

One of these functionaries said to her: “Here is a poor old woman, a very decent sort of person. Her husband used to go about with a dancing bear. The creature, though very gentle and very tame, one day threw itself on its master and ate him up. The man died——”

“Alas! my good sir,” the old woman broke in, “since that moment the poor beast and myself have been homeless.”

“What!—the beast? Is it the same that devoured your husband?”

“Alas! my good sir, it is all that is left me of the dear departed.”

THOUGHTS AND MAXIMS.—A young author, ambitious of being read, will always do better to send his work to his enemies than to his friends.

All romances that send us to sleep do not bore us—dreams, for example.

THE MUSICAL CRITIC OF THE "CHAT NOIR" GOES TO BAYREUTH.—People had so often told me, "You ought to see that!" that I wanted to see it. I have seen it. Bah!

Yes, I know the actors did their best, the orchestra played with greater perfection than that of the *Nouveautés*.¹ I met a number of Parisians, as many as you like, but there was one great drawback. All the inhabitants of that confounded country seemed to have determined to speak German. If only I had been warned of that, I should have remained quietly at home.

OVERHEARD AT THE SEASIDE.—"Tell me, do you bathe your doll sometimes?" "Yes, sir, every morning, but without water, because that might wet her."

IN A DRAPER'S SHOP.—*A young woman*. How much is this muslin?

The shopman (gallantly). One kiss the yard.

The young woman. Very well. Give me ten yards.

The shopman. That will be ten kisses.

The young woman. Certainly. Send the bill to my grandmother.

A PLEA FOR ABATEMENT.—An ostentatious miser had just bought a picture for six thousand five hundred francs. "I would ask you," he said to the dealer, "to make it six thousand. I am obliged to inform my wife of the purchase by telegram; it will make two words less!"

BOIREAU is staying in the country with his friend Bolandard, whom he congratulates on his charming residence.

"Yes, yes," said Bolandard, "it is very nice."

"And what a panorama!"

"True; and if I were not so short-sighted I should have a splendid view from my windows!"

¹ A theatre in Paris famous for the production of light operas.

"MARIE-JEANNE," said a farmer's wife to her servant, "don't lean so far over the well; you might fall in, and then we should be obliged to get our water from the stream."

"BUT come, Viscount, why don't you marry?"

"The Lord forbid! Madam, I've a holy horror of divorce."

THE DOCTORS OVERHEARD.—"Yes, they sent for me; I rushed round, and when I got there he was dead." "By Jove! it was quite natural." "What?" "Well, he preferred to suffer a little less."

THOUGHTS AND MAXIMS.—Advice to my niece (after Schopenhauer):—

When things look very black put an end to your life; but faithful to local colour, choose charcoal.

Whenever you set out on a journey to the land of chimeras, be sure to take a return ticket.

Don't read books. Bad ones will cause you to lose your taste; good ones, your time.

If you are obliged to part from your loved ones for a long period of time, take a slow train, you will be longer in getting away from them.

If you are in great trouble, don't tear out your hair. When calm returns to you, it won't give you back a single one.

SCENE.—A prison. *The Chaplain*. Unhappy young man, how is this? Locked up again? If I remember rightly, it's the third time I've seen you here. Are you not ashamed? *The Prisoner (with conviction)*. Certainly I'm ashamed, and with reason, sir. The reception-room is stuffy, the cells dark and gloomy, the warders ill-bred, and the food so bad that it makes one ill to sit down to table. Indeed, I'm not only ashamed but positively

mortified to receive persons kind enough to interest themselves in my fate in such a place ! But what can I do ?

"BUT, father, you yourself——" "I, sir, I waited to have my position made by my marriage."

OLD FRIENDS.—"Delighted ; and your charming wife ?"
"Divorced six years ago."

SHE HAD HIM THERE.—On June 10, 1892, at the Court of Common Pleas, the judge asked a lady who appeared as witness : "Your age ?" "Thirty," was the prompt reply. His lordship, with a smile : "I think it will be difficult for you to prove that." "Just as difficult as it is for you to prove the contrary," retorted the lady, "as my certificate of birth was destroyed by fire in 1850 !" Hilarity in court, which was immediately suppressed.

SEASONABLE.—Summer is late this year, but it has come at last. A dealer in fuel, having been unable to clear out his stock, posted the following notice on his door :—"Good firewood for the summer season, giving out very little heat."

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX OF WRITERS.

ABOUT, EDMOND, was born at Dreuze in 1828. He had a brilliant school and college career. His first book, *La Grèce Contemporaine* (1855), was a great success. *Le Roi des Montagnes* is one of the best of his novels. During the Franco-German War he acted as correspondent to the *Soir*. He died in 1885.

AMIEL, HENRI-FRÉDÉRIC, a philosopher and thinker of a pessimistic cast of mind, was born at Geneva in 1821. He produced little in his lifetime. His most-abiding work, the *Journal Intime*, was published after his death, which took place in 1881. It has been made familiar to us by Mrs. Humphry Ward's admirable translation.

AUGIER, ÉMILE, one of the most distinguished of modern writers of comedy in France, was born at Valence in 1820. His first dramatic venture was *La Ciguë* (1844). *Le Gendre de M. Poirier*, written in collaboration with M. Jules Sandeau, is perhaps his best play. He died at Paris in 1889.

BAÏF, JEAN ANTOINE DE, one of the youngest members of the Pleïade, was born in 1532. He wrote many poems, and adapted several classical plays. He died in 1592.

BALZAC, HONORÉ DE, one of the greatest writers of prose fiction, was born at Tours in 1799. He wrote steadily on for years without success, and first made his mark in his thirtieth year with an historical novel, *Les derniers Chouans*. His best novels, *Père Goriot*, *Eugénie Grandet*, *La Peau de Chagrin*, etc., are mostly connected with Parisian life. He died in 1850.

BANVILLE, THÉODORE DE, the son of a captain in the navy, was born at Moulins in 1823. He soon came to Paris, and devoted himself to literature. Two volumes of poetry, *Les Cariatides* (1842) and *Les Stalactites* (1846), first brought him into notice. He revived with great success many of the older forms of French verse, and was the author of novels, plays, poems, and of critical studies on literature and the drama. He died March 13, 1891.

BASSELIN, OLIVIER, a shadowy personage, supposed to have lived in the fifteenth century, was a writer of the so-called *Vaux de vire*, light, joyous songs. Some examples are given.

BAUDELAIRE, CHARLES, was born in 1821. He belongs to the second group of romantic poets. His chief work is the *Fleurs du Mal*, a collection of poems dealing with melancholy and morbid subjects. He was a good critic, and translated Poe and De Quincey, with whose genius his spirit had some affinity. He died in 1866.

BEAUMARCHAIS, CARON DE, the best dramatist of the late eighteenth century, was born in 1732. No one disputes the inimitable wit of his two Figaro plays, and his *Mémoires* will always keep for him a very high place in literature. He died in 1799.

BÉRANGER, PIERRE JEAN DE, the greatest of the song-writers of eighteenth-century France, was born at Paris, Aug. 19, 1780. He published five collections of songs, the first in 1815, and the last in 1833. He took the people for his muse, and was ardently devoted to the Napoleonic legend. He died in 1857.

BONALD, LOUIS-GABRIEL-AMBROISE DE, a political writer, and one of the emigrants of 1791, was born in 1754. He was the philosopher of the party opposed to the Revolution. His principal work is the *Législation Primitive*. He died in 1840.

BRUEYS, DAVID AUGUSTIN DE, was born at Aix in 1640, and **PALAPRAT, JEAN**, at Toulouse in 1650. To the collaboration of these two men we owe the modern version of the famous mediæval farce, *L'Avocat Patelin*, from which an extract is given. The farce is believed to belong to the middle or early part of the fifteenth century. Palaprat died in 1721, and Brueys in 1723.

CHAMFORT, NICOLAS, anecdote-monger and epigrammatist, was born in Auvergne in 1741. He took the people's side in the Revolution, but soon abandoned it; fearing arrest by the Terror, he committed suicide in 1794. His best work is to be found in his witty sayings, short anecdotes, and apothegms. He reminds us a little of Swift.

CHAMPFLEURY (pseudonym of Jules Fleury) was born at Laon in 1821. He entered a bookseller's shop in Paris, and became friendly with Murger, De Banville, and others. *Les Aventures de Mariette* (1856) first brought him into notice. He was also a critic of literature and art.

CHAVETTE (pseudonym of Eugène Vachette) was born at Paris in 1827. The studies he contributed to the newspapers soon showed

his great powers of observation. His writings are chiefly concerned with the daily life of the Parisian middle class, and are extremely amusing, though without strict claim to literary style.

DAUDET, ALPHONSE, born at Nîmes in 1840, soon came to Paris, and entered on his career of successful novelist. In some ways he resembles Dickens. His best domestic novel is *Fromont Jeune et Risler Aîné*, and *Tartarin de Tarascon* is an excellent specimen of the comic novel.

DÉSAUGIERS, the song-writer and precursor of Béranger, was born in 1772. His songs, whose subjects are chiefly love and wine, stand only second to those of Béranger, and possess great charm and melody. He was president of the *Caveau*, a famous convivial society. He died in 1827.

DES PERIERS, BONAVENTURE DE, was born about 1500. He is the author of a collection of witty, licentious tales, entitled *Nouvelles Récréations et joyeux devis*. Their style has scarcely been equalled. He was a great friend of Margaret of Navarre, and probably wrote the greater part of her *Heptameron*. He died in 1544.

DIDEROT, the editor of the *Encyclopædia*, was born at Langres in 1713. Besides his philosophical and critical works, he wrote two plays and a novel. He died at Paris in 1784.

DORAT, JEAN, a writer of light and sparkling verse, was born in 1734, and died in 1780.

DROZ, GUSTAVE, a very witty writer, the son of a famous sculptor, was born at Paris in 1832. *Monsieur, Madame, et Bébé* has been one of the most popular books in France.

DUMAS, ALEXANDRE, the elder, was born at Villiers-Cotterets, July 24, 1803. He received little education, but read much. His literary genius seems to have been awakened by Bürger's *Lenore*. He went to Paris in 1825. His first attempt at novel writing was *Nouvelles Contemporaines* (1826). A thousand copies were printed, but only four were sold. But he soon became famous, and was one of the most prolific of novelists. He died in 1870.

FEUILLET, OCTAVE, was born in 1821 at Saint-Lô. He commenced author by collaborating with MM. Bocage and Aubert in a novel published in the *National* in 1845. He is one of the most popular writers of fiction in France, and besides novels, is the author of several plays and *proverbes*. He replaced M. Scribe at the Academy in 1862, and died in 1890.

FRANCE, ANATOLE, was born at Paris in 1844. He is an accomplished critic, and an agreeable teller of tales. *Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard* is one of the freshest and pleasantest novels that has appeared for a long time.

GAUTIER, THÉOPHILE, was born in Gascony in 1808. He is a past master in the art of style, both in verse and prose. Besides being a poet of a high order, he wrote novels, short tales, and descriptions of travel. In addition he is no mean critic of literature and art. He died in 1872.

GRESSET was a Jesuit, born at Amiens in 1709. His *Ver-vert*, the burlesque history of a parrot, from which extracts are given, is one of the most delightful things of its kind. He wrote several plays, of which *Le Méchant* is the best known, and is the author of much charming light verse. He died in 1777.

GYP (pseudonym of Madame Martel) was born in 1850, and is descended from the great Mirabeau. She is one of the wittiest of French contemporary writers. She began by contributing *Études mondaines* to *La vie Parisienne*. She is a moralist in her way, and makes us see the emptiness and frivolity of fashionable and worldly life. But this is never obtruded on us, and the best cure for a fit of depression is one of Gyp's novels.

HALÉVY, LUDOVIC, was born at Paris in 1834. In collaboration with Henri Meilhac he furnished most of the librettos to Offenbach's comic operas. He is a writer of plays, short stories, and novels.

HERVIEU, PAUL, was born in 1857. He entered the diplomatic service, but soon turned to literature, and his first book was published in 1884. The sketch given here appeared in the *Journal des Débats* in 1886.

JOUBERT, JOSEPH, born in Périgord in 1754, may be regarded as the last great *Pensée* writer. In spite of weak health, he lived till 1824. His maxims deal with ethics, politics, theology, and literature. His work has been made familiar to us by the admirable essays of Sainte-Beuve and Matthew Arnold.

KOCK, PAUL DE, a Dutchman by birth, was born in 1794. His first novel, *L'Enfant de ma femme* (1811), had no success, but he gained later an European reputation. His works fill fifty-six volumes. He died in 1871.

LABICHE, EUGÈNE, was born in Paris in 1815, and died in 1888. He was intended for the bar, but his taste led him to literature, and he became one of the best writers of farcical comedy modern France has produced. His first play appeared in 1838. He wrote altogether about one hundred and fifty plays, very many in collaboration with other dramatic authors. In the Franco-German War he devoted his energies to raising a battalion of *Franco-Tireurs* in Sologne. He was elected a member of the French Academy in 1880.

LA BRUYÈRE, JEAN DE, a moralist of the type of La Rochefoucauld, was born at Paris in 1645. In 1687 he published a series of *Caractères* on the model of Theophrastus. He was a great master of style, and our English essayists owe not a little to him. He died in 1696.

LA FONTAINE, JEAN DE, was born at a little town in Champagne in 1621, and died in 1695. The first volume of the *Fables* appeared in 1668, and the last in 1694. His *Contes et Nouvelles* (1685) are extremely amusing, but very licentious and coarse. He could be pathetic as well as humorous, was ever heedless of the ordinary business of life, and was the friend of Racine, Boileau, and Molière.

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, FRANÇOIS DE MARSILLAC, DUC DE, was born in 1613. He belonged to one of the most noble families of France, and played a great part in the Fronde. The idea of writing the celebrated maxims, on which his fame chiefly rests, is said to have been suggested to him by Madame de Sablé, one of the most prominent members of the Rambouillet circle. He died of gout in 1680.

LESAGE, ALAIN RENÉ, was born at Sarzeau, near Vannes, May 8, 1668, and died at Boulogne, Nov. 17, 1747. He was educated for the law, but it was suggested that he should turn his attention to Spanish literature. He began with various translations, and was nearly forty before he produced any important work. He earned most money by writing operettas and vaudevilles for the *Théâtre de la Foire*, but they were not things to live. *Le Diable Boiteux* appeared in 1707, and *Turcaret*, a comedy, in 1709. *Gil Blas* is his greatest work; it originally appeared in 1715, and was not completed until 1735.

MAROT, CLÉMENT, born probably in the beginning of 1495, wrote eclogues, elegies, and songs, and was immensely popular in his lifetime. Much of his work, though expressed in the artificial forms of ballades, rondeaux, and the like, is very graceful and beautiful. He died in 1544.

MAUPASSANT, GUY DE, born in 1850, is perhaps one of the greatest of living French novelists. He is unsurpassed in telling a short tale; his novel of *Pierre et Jean* is a masterpiece of style and artistic construction.

MENDÈS, CATULLE, was born at Bordeaux in 1840. In 1860 he began writing for the reviews, and has never since ceased publishing poems and short tales of much artistic merit, and of a fine style. He is exceedingly clever, but most often chooses to treat of subjects of dubious character. The extracts here given may serve to show his graceful fantasy.

MÉRIMÉE, PROSPER, born at Paris in 1803, was the son of a distinguished painter. He was a master of French prose, and his best work is to be found in his short tales and his familiar letters. The *Mosaique*, a collection of tales, one of which is here given, constitutes his greatest title to fame. He died in 1870.

MOLIÈRE, JEAN BAPTISTE POQUELIN DE, the greatest of writers of comedy, was born at Paris in 1622. *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (1659) first revealed his powers. He was actor, manager, and dramatist, and always kept before him the moral purpose of the stage. His two greatest plays are *Tartuffe*, a satire on religious hypocrisy, and *Le Misanthrope*, a satire on the frivolity of fashionable life. He died in 1673.

MONTAIGNE, MICHEL DE, was born at the Château of Montaigne, near Bordeaux, Feb. 28, 1533, and died Sept. 13, 1592. On leaving school he studied law, and in 1554 was made counsellor in the Bordeaux *Parlement*. Later he became Mayor of Bordeaux. The first two books of the *Essais* were published in 1580, and a third book appeared in 1588. He was the first to write essays, as we understand the term in modern literature. His humour has much in common with that of the best English humorists.

MURGER, HENRY, was born at Paris in 1822. He describes in his novels, of which *La Vie de Bohème* is the most famous, the somewhat wild and careless life of the young artists and men of letters of the Latin quarter. He had wit and sprightliness of style in narration. He died at Paris in 1861.

MUSSET, ALFRED DE, was born at Paris in 1810. While very young he came under the influence of the famous *cénacle*, and published a volume of poems at nineteen. His lyrics have the note of genuine passion, his prose tales are excellent, and his *proverbes* have a grace, a delicacy, and a refinement of wit that have never been surpassed. In his poetry he was much influenced by Byron. He died in 1857.

PAILLERON, EDOUARD, a successful writer of excellent comedies, was born at Paris in 1834. His most famous play is *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*, produced at the *Français* in 1881. On the occasion of the reception of M. Ludovic Halévy as a member of the French Academy, the welcome was spoken by M. Pailleron, and his speech remains one of the best ever heard there.

PANARD, CHARLES FRANÇOIS, a writer of comic operettas, light poems and songs, was born near Chartres about 1694. He is regarded as one of the propagators of the vaudeville in France. He died at Paris in 1765.

PASCAL, BLAISE, was born in Auvergne in 1623. He was an extraordinarily precocious child, and one of the few who have justified their early promise. His greatest work, *Provinciales*, appeared in 1656. The *Pensées*, from which extracts are given here, are scattered reflections found among his papers after his death. He was a victim to a melancholy not unlike that from which our poet Cowper suffered. He died in 1662.

RABELAIS, FRANÇOIS, the son of an innkeeper, was born at Chinon about 1495. He became a monk, but disliking the restraint, threw off the cowl and studied medicine at Montpellier, and afterwards practised at Lyons. He twice accompanied Cardinal du Bellais to Rome. In 1539 he took up a monkish life again, but again quitted it, and travelled in Italy. On his return to France he was presented with the living of Meudon, which he resigned in 1551. The first instalment of his great work was published in 1532, and *Gargantua*, forming the first part of the work as we now have it, in 1535. The second book of *Pantagruel* appeared in 1546, and the third in 1552; the fourth, which embodied the early volume published in 1532, did not appear until after his death in 1564. His other contributions to literature were a burlesque almanac and a short work describing a festival at Rome. He probably obtained the idea of his great work from *Les grandes et inestimables Chroniques du grant et énorme géant Gargantua*, a book he edited, and perhaps partly rewrote. He may be regarded as the greatest of French humorists, nay, perhaps of all humorists. He died in 1553.

REGNARD (RENARD), JEAN FRANÇOIS, was born at Paris, Feb. 7, 1655, and died at Grillon, Sept. 5, 1709. He was the only son of a wealthy merchant, and before taking to literature spent six years in travel (1677-82), of which he has left us interesting narratives. He began to write for the stage in 1688. His plays are very numerous, the most famous being *Le Joueur*, represented at the *Comédie Française* in 1696, and *Le Légataire Universel* (1708). Besides his travels and plays, he wrote epistles, satires, and various poems. Critics generally place him next to Molière among the comedy-writers of France.

RENAN, ERNEST, was born at Tréguier in 1823. He was destined for the clerical profession, but as his mind matured he felt unable to enter the priesthood, and applied himself to the study of Semitic languages. He was the master of the most exquisite prose. To amuse his rare leisure he wrote the dramas from which the extracts here printed are taken. *Caliban* first appeared as a *feuilleton* in the *Temps*. His most famous work is the *Vie de Jésus*. He was elected a member of the Academy in 1878. He died Oct. 2, 1892.

RIVAROL, journalist and moralist, was born about 1750, and commenced author by translating Dante. He took the Royalist side

in the Revolution, and had to leave Paris. He died at Berlin in 1801. His detached sayings are amongst the most excellent things of their kind.

RONCARD, PIERRE DE, called by his contemporaries the "prince of poets," was born in the Vendômois in 1524. He was employed in the diplomatic service till an illness, which left him incurably deaf, made him turn to literature. He has left an enormous quantity of verse, the best of which are his sonnets. He died in 1585.

RUTEBÆUF (born 1230) was one of the *trouvères*. Little is known about his life beyond scanty allusions in his verse. His name even seems to be a nickname. He wrote a great quantity of verse, personal, comic, satirical, and devotional.

SANDEAU, JULES, was born in 1811. He came to Paris to study law, fell in with young Madame Dudevant (George Sand), and collaborated with her in a novel published about 1831. He then devoted himself wholly to literature, and wrote novels and plays. He was elected to the Academy in 1858, and died in 1883.

SÉVIGNÉ, MADAME DE, the queen of letter-writers, was born at Paris in 1626. She married young; her husband was killed in a duel. She was devotedly attached to her daughter, who married the Comte de Grignan, governor of Provence. Her letters are very numerous, and mostly addressed to the Comtesse de Grignan. They form a complete history of the writer, and their epistolary style has never been surpassed. She died of small-pox at Grignan in 1696.

TALLEMANT DES RÉAUX, the author of the famous *Historiettes*, was born at La Rochelle about 1619. His anecdotes were written in the years preceding 1660, and offer a commentary on the society of the end of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. He takes us behind the scenes, and gives us much amusing and even valuable information. He died in 1692.

VAUVENARGES, LUC DE CLAPIERS, MARQUIS DE, essayist and moralist, was born at Aix in 1715. He entered the army, but failed to obtain promotion, and was equally unsuccessful in an attempt to enter the diplomatic service. He was untouched by the scepticism of his time, and his writings prove him to have been an earnest and upright man. He died in 1747 at the early age of thirty-two.

VERLAINE, PAUL, was born at Metz, 30th March 1844. As a poet of rare distinction he is gradually becoming known in England.

VIGNY, ALFRED DE, was born at Loches in 1799. His best known works are the prose-romance of *Cinq Mars*, and the play of *Chatterton*. He also wrote a considerable proportion of excellent verse. He died in 1864.

VILLIERS, LE COMTE PHILIPPE-AUGUSTE-MATHIAS DE VILLIERS DE L'ISLE-ADAM, was born at Saint-Brieuc, November 7, 1840, and died in hospital at Paris, August 18, 1889. He has been a distinct literary influence among younger French writers.

VILLON, FRANÇOIS, was born at Paris in 1431. The date of his death is uncertain, but it is generally placed towards the end of the century. He led a wild, irregular life. The first edition of his works was published in 1489. He was the first great poet of the people, and his poems are distinguished by sweetness of melody, art of expression, genuine pathos, grim sardonic humour, and marvellous truth of description; he gives us a perfect picture of fifteenth century Paris. No writer has handled the *ballade* with more exquisite skill or more enduring success.

VOITURE, the wittiest and brightest of letter-writers and of society poets, was born in 1598. He belonged to the *Rambouillet* circle, and was its leader in the art of *badinage*, in which he excelled. Neither his letters nor his poems were published during his lifetime. He died in 1648.

VOLTAIRE, FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET DE, was born at Paris in 1694. During his long life he published verse of every conceivable kind, plays, tales, histories, criticism, philosophical and scientific treatises. He is the true representative of the eighteenth century. He spent three years in England, and three years as the friend and guest of Frederick the Great at Berlin. In 1755 he fixed his abode on the Lake of Geneva. In 1778 he made a triumphal return to Paris, and died there three months afterwards.

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